


Ask Leyla: How much sugar is acceptable?

Q: In your opinion, what is an acceptable intake of sugar? What fruits have the lowest amounts of sugar? Is the sugar from fruit better? I am reading all labels carefully for added sugar, trying to eliminate it as much as possible.

A: Kudos to you for becoming a sugar sleuth! I love this question because it requires some context. 

What's an acceptable intake? That depends. The American Heart Association says it's OK for adults to consume up to 450 calories per week from sugar-sweetened beverages. Now consider that a can of Coca-Cola contains 140 calories. That's roughly three and a quarter cans of soda a week. Should the AHA be a beacon for dietary guidelines given their stance on sugar—not to mention their continued demonization of saturated fat in favor of pro-inflammatory vegetable oils?

I don't think so.

So how much sugar is acceptable? If you recall from [my previous article on sugar](#), it's a toxic, addictive anti-nutrient. That's just for starters. If you have insulin resistance or metabolic syndrome, prediabetes, diabetes, heart disease, candida, cancer or poor immunity, your best bet is to avoid it altogether.

Is sugar from fruit better? Yes. Especially compared to table sugar (sucrose), dextrose, maltose, high fructose corn syrup, maple syrup, evaporated cane juice, brown rice syrup and all artificial sweeteners. The fruit in sugar is pure fructose, also contained in honey.

So can we eat all the fruit and honey we want? No. Doing so will eventually raise triglyceride levels and contribute to fatty liver disease, even if you're not overweight. Consuming juice and fruit smoothies will only exacerbate this.

We even tell our cancer patients to avoid bananas, grapes and watermelon because of high sugar content. Why? Because cancer loves sugar.

If you don't have any health conditions or weight issues, feel free to indulge along with a healthy diet. Remember to consume more vegetables than fruit. And choose fruits lowest in sugar most often: Berries (all), grapefruit, plums, apricots, Granny Smith apples, kiwifruit and tomatoes.

To your health!