



Making Food Healthier and Healthier Food More Affordable: Added Sugars Reduction Rationale

Walmart Commitment

Reduce added sugars by 10 percent in key categories of food products sold in Walmart stores by 2015.

Suppliers will be asked to voluntarily fill out a scorecard annually so that Walmart can assess and report our progress towards our target.

Target categories

Added sugar categories include:

Grain products such as sweet breads and rolls, muffins and breakfast pastries, granola, trail mix bars, snack bars, breakfast bars, pancakes, waffles, French toast

Dairy products such as yogurt, flavored milk, puddings

Condiments and sauces such as salad dressing, ketchup, barbecue sauce, pasta sauce

Fruit drinks

Canned fruit

Rationale

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend Americans choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners, such as amounts suggested by the USDA Food Guide and the DASH Eating Plan³.

Impact

Reducing added sugars from foods in these categories should improve the nutritional quality of these foods and help customers consume less added sugars.

Background

Definition

Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods during processing or preparation. Added sugars do not include naturally occurring sugars such as those that occur in milk and fruits³.

Dietary Sources

According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, food groups that contribute the following amounts of added sugars to the American diet include³:

- 9.7 percent - fruit drinks (fruitades and fruit punch)
- 8.6 percent - dairy desserts and milk products (ice cream, sweetened yogurt, and sweetened milk)
- 5.8 percent - grain products (e.g., cinnamon toast and honey nut waffles)

Current Intakes

From 2001 to 2004, the usual intake of added sugars for Americans was 22.2 teaspoons per day (355 calories per day)⁴. Between 1970 and 2005, average annual availability of sugars/added sugars increased by 19 percent⁴.

Health Risks

According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, added sugars supply calories but few or no nutrients. Individuals who consume food or beverages high in added sugars tend to consume more calories than those who consume food or beverages low in added sugars³. Additionally, they also tend to consume lower amounts of micronutrients³. For this reason, the Dietary Guidelines recommend Americans decrease their intake of such foods to reduce calorie intake and help achieve recommended nutrient intakes³. The American Heart Association also recognizes that excessive consumption of sugars has been linked with several metabolic abnormalities and adverse health conditions⁴, such as Type 2 diabetes, increased blood cholesterol, and heart disease.

Health Recommendations

US Dietary Guidelines

The [2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee](#) addressed added sugars in the diet and states:

- Americans should reduce consumption of calories from solid fats and added sugars (SoFAS).
- The restaurant and food industries are encouraged to offer foods in appropriate portion sizes that are low in added sugars⁴.

The 2005 [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) addressed added sugars in the American diet:

- The body's response to sugars does not depend on whether they are naturally present in a food or added to the food.
- The greater the consumption of foods containing large amounts of added sugars, the more difficult it is to consume enough nutrients without gaining weight.
- Consumption of added sugars provides calories while providing little, if any, of the essential nutrients.
- In some cases, small amounts of sugars added to nutrient-dense foods, such as breakfast cereals and reduced-fat milk products, may increase a person's intake of such foods by enhancing the palatability of these products, thus improving nutrient intake without contributing excessive calories.

American Heart Association

In August, the released a scientific statement on [Dietary Sugars Intake and Cardiovascular Health](#) defining a daily upper limit on added sugars for:

- Adult women at no more than 100 calories or 6½ teaspoons a day from added sugars.
- Men at no more than 150 calories or 9½ teaspoons a day from added sugars⁵.

Regulations

While there are no federal regulation limits on added sugars in the United States, the FDA does require that sugars are listed on "Nutrition Facts" panels. However, there are no requirements to specifically indicate those that come from added sugars. Additionally, the FDA regulates the use of the phrases "No Added Sugars" and "Without Added Sugars," which are allowed if no sugar or sugar-containing ingredient is added during processing⁶.

References

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3. United States Department of Health and Human Services & United States Department of Agriculture. (2005). *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*. Retrieved on September 15, 2010, from the USDA website: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/pdf/DGA2005.pdf>.
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6. United States Food and Drug Administration. (2010). *Appendix A: Definitions of content claims*. Retrieved on September 15, 2010, from the FDA website: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/FoodLabelingNutrition/FoodLabelingGuide/ucm064911.htm>.

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