



Sugar in Fruit. How Much is Too Much

Strawberries, bananas, oranges, kiwi... the list goes on and on. Fruit is touted as a super-healthy snack option, but while the fiber and other nutrients found in fruit are a great part of any diet, many varieties can also be very high in sugar. **And too much sugar, regardless of where it comes from, can have some seriously negative effects.** Does this mean run from the produce aisle screaming? Definitely not. But it might be smart to keep an eye on fruit-based sugar consumption.

The American Heart Association recommends no more than 26 grams of sugar per day for women, or 36 grams per day for men. And for men and women ages 19 to 30, the USDA recommends two cups of fruit per day. But depending on which fruit is picked, this could be bad news for fruit lovers: Just two cups of sliced bananas adds up to the maximum recommended amount, clocking in at 36 grams of sugar! Organic fruit, frozen or fresh, is best. Avoid canned and dried fruits.

Fruit-tastic — Your Action Plan

Traditionally, **a diet high in fruits and vegetables has been shown to help prevent weight gain (when compared to a diet high in fiber from other foods)**. Although fruits can hold three times more calories per serving when compared to vegetables, they're still a relatively low-calorie choice, especially when considering how good fruit's high water and fiber content are at promoting feelings of fullness

Mariea Collazo-Clavell MD States, "It is a common myth that if you have diabetes you shouldn't eat certain foods because they are "too sweet." Some fruits do contain more sugar than others, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't eat them if you have diabetes. The total amount of carbohydrates affects blood sugar levels more than does the source of carbohydrates or whether the source is a starch or sugar".

One serving of fruit should contain 15 grams of carbohydrates. The size of the serving depends on the carbohydrate content of the fruit. The advantage of eating a low-carbohydrate fruit is that you can consume a larger portion. But whether you eat a low-carb or high-carb fruit, as long as the serving size contains 15 grams of carbohydrates, the effect on your blood sugar is the same.

The following fruit servings contain about 15 grams of carbohydrates:

- 1/2 medium banana
- 1/2 cup (83 grams) cubed mango
- 1 1/4 cup (190 grams) cubed watermelon
- 1 1/4 cup (180 grams) whole strawberries
- 1/3 cup (80 grams) sapodilla (chikoo)
- 3/4 cup (124 grams) cubed pineapple

If you are diabetic or trying to lose weight, choose fruits and vegetables that contain less sugar and less carbohydrates to get the fiber, vitamins and minerals you need.

Berries

If you want to keep your sugar intake low but still want to eat fruits, berries are your best option. Most of the carbohydrates found in berries are fiber and very little is sugar. For example, a serving of 1/2 cup of raspberries has only 2.7 grams of sugar and the same portion of strawberries has 3.5 grams of sugar. Blueberries have slightly more sugar, with about 7.4 grams per 1/2 cup, but this is still less than half of what is found in a typical serving of fruit. As a comparison, a medium banana has 14.4 grams of sugar, a medium apple has 18.9 grams of sugar and half a mango has 23.0 grams of sugar.

Also, let's not forget the evolutionary argument... humans and pre-humans have been eating fruit for millions of years. The human body is well adapted to the small amounts of fructose found in nature.

There are lots of nutrients in them that are important for health. This includes fiber, vitamins, minerals, as well as a plethora of antioxidants and phytonutrients.

Fiber, especially soluble fiber, has many benefits. This includes reduced cholesterol levels, slowed absorption of carbohydrates and increased satiety. Plus there are many studies showing that soluble fiber can contribute to weight loss

Fruits tend to be high in several vitamins and minerals... especially Vitamin C, Potassium and Folate, which many people don't get enough of.

Of course, "fruit" is an entire food group. There are dozens (or hundreds) of different fruits found in nature and the nutrient composition can vary greatly between the different types of fruit.

There are many other studies showing that fruit and vegetable consumption is associated with a lower risk of heart attacks and stroke, the two most common causes of death in Western countries

Bottom Line: There are many studies showing that fruit intake is associated with a lower risk of serious diseases like heart disease, stroke and type II diabetes.

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Moderation is the key with anything including fruit consumption.

Cruciferous Vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables include broccoli, cauliflower, kale, bok choy, cabbage and Brussels sprouts. All of these vegetables are very nutritious, while having a very low sugar content. For example, 1 cup of cooked cauliflower florets contains only 2.6 grams of natural sugar, and the same amount of broccoli contains 2.2 grams of sugar. You can include generous servings of these vegetables in your stir-fries, soups and salads without having to worry about your sugar intake. The high fiber content of

cruciferous vegetables can help you feel full on fewer calories to help you lose weight on your low-sugar diet.

Leafy Greens

All leafy green vegetables contain barely any sugar, on average less than 0.5 grams per cup raw. You can opt for any type of lettuce, such as Romaine lettuce, iceberg lettuce, arugula or red leaf lettuce, or choose spinach, collard greens or Swiss chard to prepare low-sugar salads. Choose a salad dressing or vinaigrette that is free of added sugar, or prepare one with olive oil and sugar-free balsamic vinegar. Many leafy greens can also be used in omelets or stir-fries.

Mushrooms, Tomatoes and Radishes

Most non-starchy vegetables have very low sugar contents and can be consumed liberally on a sugar-free diet. You can eat a whole cup of raw mushrooms, an entire medium tomato and a few radishes for under 5 grams of natural sugars. Cucumber, zucchini, green beans, carrots and bell peppers also have very low sugar and high fiber contents, so they won't influence your blood sugar levels significantly.