

DECEPTIVELY SWEET

New guidelines limit the consumption of sugars you didn't even know were there.

By Heather Mayer Irvine

WHAT DID YOU HAVE for lunch today, and how much sugar was in it? It might be more than you realized, thanks to sugars added to seemingly healthy foods like yogurt, salad dressings, and bread. And it's almost certainly more than you wanted.

In November 2015, the Food and Drug Administration capped sugar intake, recommending no more than 10 percent of total calories, or about 50 grams (12.5 tsp.) of added sugar per day. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, added sugar makes up about 13 percent of adults' caloric intake.

The key word is "added." Foods that have naturally occurring sugar, such as fruits, vegetables, and dairy, are packed with nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Packaged foods with added sugar don't have the same nutritional benefits, and eating more than the recommended 50 grams makes it hard to eat nutrient-dense foods that have fiber, iron, zinc, and vitamin E.

The FDA has proposed including a line for "added sugars" on nutrition labels to help consumers make informed choices. But only if those labels are

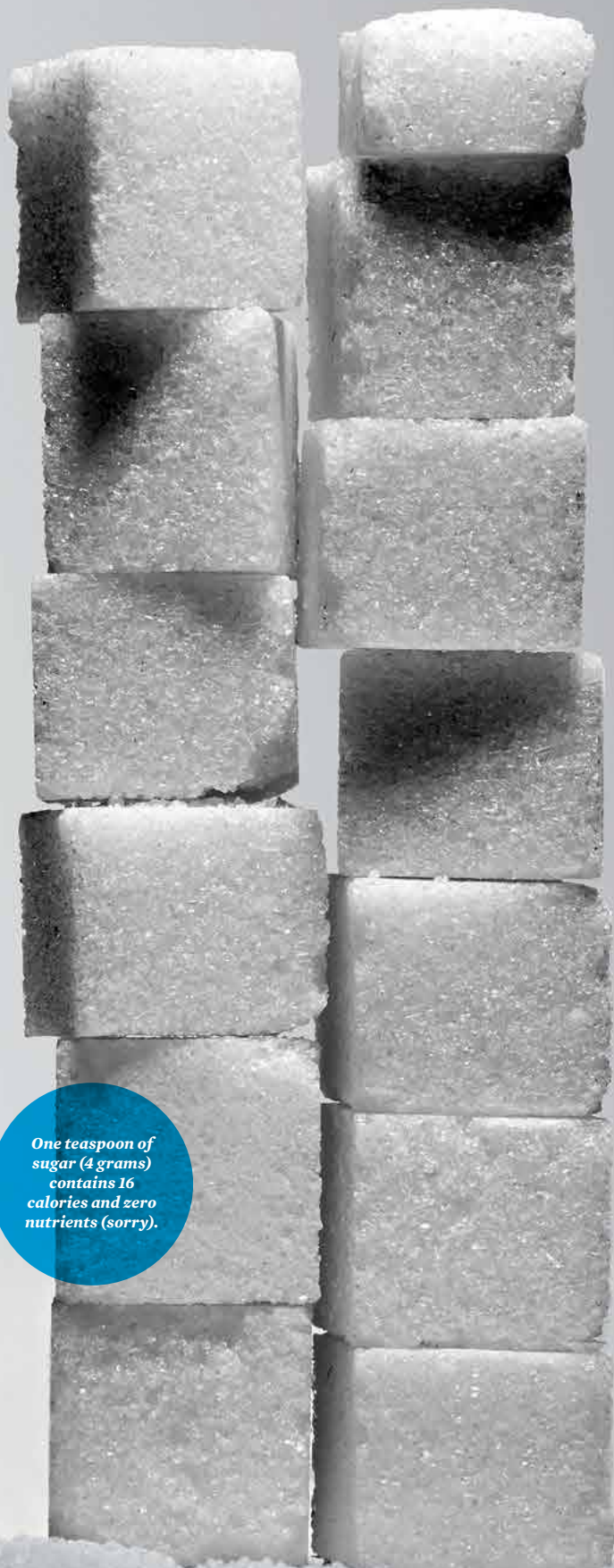
approved will you know how much added sugar is in a packaged food, as natural and added sugars are listed together.

The first line of defense is to look for sugar in the ingredients list. Aliases for sugar include sucrose, brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, maple syrup, and raw cane syrup/sugar. If they're listed in the top five ingredients, it's best to eat something else.

To figure out how much sugar is added to a product with naturally occurring sugars—like milk or yogurt—compare the nutrition label for a plain version with that of flavored. For example, eight ounces of low-fat milk has 13 grams of sugar (in the form of lactose). The same amount of low-fat chocolate milk has 24 grams of sugar; take away the 13 grams of lactose and you're left with 11 grams of added sugar.

Routine exercise plays a major role in promoting insulin sensitivity—key in diabetes prevention. This may mean that as a runner you can "afford" a bit more added sugar in your diet. But add the sweet stuff yourself to control the amount you consume.

One teaspoon of sugar (4 grams) contains 16 calories and zero nutrients (sorry).



OPPOSITE PAGE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY MEDIA/ALITIMAGES/ALAMY (ICED TEA); IAN DAGNALL/ALAMY (CEREAL); RADIM BEZNOŠKA/ALAMY (STARBUCK'S CUP)

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

Check the label: Sugar is added to many common foods.

■ = 1 tsp. (4 g) added sugar



Instant oatmeal, cinnamon, 1 packet



Yogurt, fruit flavored, 8 oz.



Jarred pasta sauce, 1.2 cups



BBQ sauce, 2 Tbsp.



Bottled sweetened iced tea, 16 oz.



Chocolate milk, 8 oz.



Breakfast cereal, Frosted Mini-Wheats, 1 oz.



Sports drink, 16 oz.



Starbucks Caramel Macchiato, 16 oz.

Low Sugar, Full Taste

This runner-friendly menu is packed with nutrients, protein, and high-quality carbs without totally depriving you of sweets.

POSTRUN BREAKFAST

- 2 eggs scrambled with 1 cup spinach, ½ cup diced mushrooms and onions
- 1 pear topped with 2 tsp. cinnamon-sugar blend
- 2 slices sprouted whole-grain bread

MORNING SNACK

- ½ cup dried cherries, 20 almonds
- 16 oz. unsweetened iced green tea

LUNCH

- 1 ½ cups lentil soup
- 2 Tbsp. hummus with handful of fresh veggies
- 1 cup fruit salad with ½ cup plain Greek yogurt topped with 1 tsp. honey

AFTERNOON SNACK

- 2 oz. turkey jerky

DINNER

- 4 oz. baked salmon with 1 cup wild rice
- 1 cup steamed cauliflower, topped with 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese

DESSERT

- 1 slice olive-oil cake with ½ cup blueberries and a dollop of sweetened whipped cream

Total added sugar: 10 tsp. (40 grams)

Dump the Soda
Consuming too much sugar has been linked with a host of ailments.

DIABETES

High-sugar diets have been associated with obesity, increasing the risk of Type 2 diabetes. A 2015 study found that a regular intake of sweetened drinks was tied to a greater incidence of the disease.

VISCERAL FAT

Drinking sweetened beverages daily is associated with visceral fat, or fat around internal organs. This type of fat (also called belly fat) may play a role in insulin resistance and Type 2 diabetes.

CHRONIC DISEASE

Sugar is also a potential culprit for obesity, liver damage, heart disease, and cancer. High-sugar diets increase levels of bad LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, and decrease levels of good HDL cholesterol.

HUNGER

Refined sugar messes with the hormones that make you feel full. When you eat too much added sugar, you don't get feelings of satiety and can end up eating more.