

ARE YOU TOO SWEET?

SUGAR SHOCK! – HOW SUGAR AFFECTS CHILDREN



It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the role of sugar in childhood obesity, chronic disease, and illness in children. It used to be that any sugar found in our diets came from fruit and honey. Today sugar is found in almost every processed food and beverage contributing to tooth decay, behavioural issues, obesity, and increased risk of insulin resistance and ultimately type 2 diabetes. We know that too much sugar is a danger to our health, but are we educating our kids about these dangers and creating a positive foundation to make good choices?

Sugar Shock

- Approximately 27% of Canadian children are overweight or obese.
- The average Canadian child consumes approx. 25 tsp of sugar/day (WHO recommends 6 tsp/day).
- Sugar acts like a drug. It has an opiate effect that activates the brain rewards centre.
- Refined sugar has no nutritional value and can contribute to nutrient deficiencies.

Top Sugar Shockers

Average amount per serving:

- 6 oz low fat yogurt: 12 tsp
- 1 355ml can soda/pop: 10 tsp
- 100 g granola bar: 6 tsp
- 150 ml fruit Juice: 5 tsp
- 1 oz cereal: 3 tsp
- 1 tbsp condiments: 1 tsp

Typical School Lunch:
Includes a juice box, granola bar,
and a yogurt:
Approx. 20 tsp of sugar!

Sources: <https://globalnews.ca/news/2688993/childhood-obesity-rates-fall-in-canada-for-the-first-time-in-years-study/>
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2011003/article/11540-eng.htm>
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/sugary-drinks-fact-sheet/>
<https://www.sheknows.com/health-and-wellness/articles/826563/how-is-sugar-hurting-your-kids>
<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/18-surprising-foods-high-in-sugar#section18>



Home – Parents set the pattern for a child’s diet and lifestyle choices. Offer healthy meals and snacks and participate in regular physical activity. Studies show that what parents model around good nutrition has an impact!

School – Increase access to healthy food while limiting access to unhealthy food. Assess cafeterias, vending machines, fundraisers, and more. Healthy eating at school supports learning, physical and mental growth and development. All of this reinforces healthy skills and choices at home.

Friends – Peer pressure is an unavoidable rite of passage for children and strongly influences their decisions around food. Homemade food, like no-name low cost snacks, can initiate bullying! Pack your child a healthy lunch and speak to your child’s teacher, recommend a book like “YOKO” by Rosemary Wells, or initiate a school presentation on tolerance and kindness and incorporate food into the discussion.

Food Industry – Unfortunately the food industry is not our friend. Food is formulated to keep the purchaser wanting more. Fight back with your dollar and avoid the inside aisles of your grocery store! Purchase more whole foods and shop at local farmer’s markets. Your children will be healthier for it!