



## 10 reasons to say "no" to sugar

*Australia is in the process of reviewing its dietary guidelines. Industry pressure is at an all-time high to remove a dietary guideline cautioning us to "eat only a moderate amount of sugars and foods containing added sugars."*



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**1** Sugar provides empty calories. It lacks vitamins, minerals and the important phytochemicals, which guard against disease.

**2** Sugar-rich foods can be a vehicle for saturated fats, particularly nasty trans fats (eg in cream buns and sweet biscuits).

**3** Sugar contributes to excessive calorie intakes in an already obese population.

**4** Diets high in sugar have been associated with a reduced intake of certain vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre.

**5** High-sugar diets have been linked with a lower intake of protective foods, such as vegetables, fruits and wholemeal bread.

**6** Sugary foods promote dental caries, particularly in susceptible groups, such as children, the indigenous population and where the water supply is not fluoridated. 34 per cent of Australians and 43 per cent of New Zealanders live with a non-fluoridated water supply.

**7** Sugars contribute to the glycaemic load of the diet. Diets with a high glycaemic load combined with a low intake of fibres from grains are a risk factor for non-insulin dependent diabetics.

**8** Sugar-rich diets can increase triglyceride levels, especially in people with insulin resistance. High levels of triglycerides are a risk factor for heart disease.

**9** There is a possible link between high-sugar intakes and bowel cancer.

**10** There is no evidence linking a high-sugar diet with health benefits.

Most dietary guidelines around the world still advocate moderate intakes of sugar and sugary foods. While sugar restrictions have been relaxed, even for diabetic diets, the best advice is to use only small amounts of sugar to enhance the palatability of wholegrain or high fibre foods, rather than consuming it through junk foods such as sweets and soft drinks.

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