

How to Cut Out Refined Sugar from Your Child's Diet

It's amazing how refined sugar and chemical sweeteners are so often added to our everyday [foods](#). Foods that you wouldn't even suspect having added sweeteners are big culprits. With the ever-growing diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and increased hyperactivity in our children, it's no wonder parents are now looking to dietary changes as a possible solution. Eliminating refined sugar in your children's diets can benefit their [health](#), their ability to focus, and their educational life.

Instructions

The label-reading tools to successfully determine what sugars to avoid

Draw up a plan that will help you identify and eliminate the sugar currently hiding out in your kitchen. Write down all the products you buy that have added sugar. When using a product, check the label to see if there are any sugars lurking. Some sugars to look for that are listed on food labels are:

- Sugar
- Brown sugar
- High Fructose Corn Syrup (or HFCS)
- Glucose
- Fructose
- Corn sweetener (HFCS)
- Corn syrup
- Dextrose (same as glucose)
- Fruit juice concentrate
- Invert sugar
- Lactose
- Maltose
- Malt syrup
- Sucrose
- Syrup

Every time you find these sugars in your foods, note on your list the kind of sugar you found and in what product you found it. Then you can determine where the sugars are coming from and can take the next step to rid your kitchen of added sugar.

1. Educate yourself on which sugars are bad for you and which sugars are okay in moderation. When reading labels, remember that the manufacturer lists the ingredients in order of amount, from greatest to least. If any sugar is included in the first three or four ingredients, chances are that the product in question is high in sugar content. Try to avoid these types of products.
2. Determine which products tend to be high in added sugars and keep this in mind when walking the aisles at the grocery store. If it helps, make a note next to each item on your shopping list that tends to harbor added sugars. Just because something seems good for you doesn't mean that it is. Some products that are usually high in sugar content are:
 - Cereals
 - Peanut butter
 - Breakfast bars
 - Salad dressings
 - Processed foods, such as pre-packaged frozen dishes
 - Tomato sauce
 - Juice
 - Flavored, pre-packaged oatmeal
 - Crackers
 - Jarred fruit
 - "Yogurt" snacks
 - Ketchup
3. Get your kids in on the plan. This is more difficult than it seems--(or maybe not, depending on how well you know your kids!) Most kids--and let's face it, adults--love sugar and gravitate towards products with high amounts of it added in. The elimination of sugar in anyone's diet is a difficult process. Sugar is addicting and the sudden absence of it from your diet can cause a kind of withdrawal. Like most addictions, the best way to deal with the change is to get rid of it altogether--cold turkey. This will cause a lot of grief and woe in your children's lives, initially. But by the third day of the elimination, you'll find that everyone in your household is not missing it so much.
4. Once you've reached the point where you are eating with little to no added refined sugars, you can go ahead and add certain kinds back, such as fructose, honey, molasses, and even occasionally, brown sugar. Maple syrup is a wonderful, healthful alternative for you to consider, when adding sweeteners to your culinary creations.