

Hidden Sugars

Most of us know that we can't eat sugar in massive quantities and get away without any health issues popping up. Too much sugar will make us fat and lead to tooth decay ... we know that but what's not so obvious is the amount of hidden sugar in the processed food we eat.

The Cuppa Club recently held a Healthy Lunchbox forum to discuss how to make your child's lunchbox as healthy as possible and the dangers of hidden sugars. We were all shocked and surprised at how many products that are considered healthy contain these hidden sugars. So we decided to pass this information on to all the parents within the school as it is a very important issue at the moment. Only today I was listening to the radio and they were talking about the government bringing in a sugar tax.

Do you know what a hidden sugar is?

Sugar can be hard to spot in children's food, as it's called many different things. All the following are forms of sugar, which is only needed in small amounts:

- Honey
- Sucrose
- Glucose
- Maltose
- Dextrose
- Fructose
- Hydrolysed starch
- Corn or Maize syrup
- Molasses
- Raw/brown sugar
- Treacle
- Concentrated fruit juice
- You can also see how much sugar is in the food by looking at the front of pack labelling or the Nutritional information panel on the back of the pack - look under "Carbohydrates - of which sugar".

If any of these are top of the list of ingredients then the product is very high in sugar. A product is considered to have high sugar if there is 15g or more sugar per 100g and low if the product has 5g or less per 100g. Remember that healthy options may be lower in fat but they often compensate by increasing the sugar content

Some foods such as fruit and milk have natural occurring sugars.

When we looked at some of the food products at the forum this is what we found:-

Fruit Shoot (Orange) 200ml has 23g of sugars which is the equivalent to 5 teaspoons of sugar.

Yoghurts – a healthy option is just some plain yoghurt with some fruit or honey mixed in. However, if your child prefers flavoured yoghurt, Munch Bunch yogurts seemed to be the best of the children’s yogurts. They have only 2.5 teaspoons of sugar in.

Dairylea Lunchables (Ham & Cheese) has 1.8g of salt in which is ½ the recommended amount which is 3g for 4 – 6 year olds.

Capri sun (200ml) has 9 teaspoons of sugar in.

We worked out that if a child has the following in their lunchbox:-



- Capri sun
- Honey or Jam Sandwich (which the fruit shoot represents)
- Yoghurt
- Chocolate bar

The child would have had the equivalent of **15 teaspoons of sugar.**

So as a family, learn to enjoy food containing less sugar - the love for sugary food is learnt. For the sake of our health and well- being, isn't it worth re-educating our taste buds? Not an easy one - sugar has addictive tendencies - but worth a try.

