

“sugar continued”

The **recommended** daily maximum amount of **added** sugar (meaning sugar that’s beyond what food naturally contains) per day by the American Heart Association:

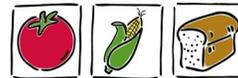
Men 9 teaspoons, women 5 teaspoons, children 3 teaspoons. The average daily consumption of added sugar in America is 22.2 teaspoons! These added calories have many health authorities concerned. Sugar goes by many names, including molasses, evaporated cane juice, nectar, corn sweetener, honey, syrup, and anything ending in –ose (sucrose, fructose, dextrose, maltose) . It’s all sugar. **Tip:** Sugar isn’t evil, but needs to be consumed in knowledgeable moderation. Rather than waste your sugar intake on sodas and other empty calories, consider flavored yogurts or flavored milk.



What are the ingredients in the foods you love?

It is the goal of Foodbank of Siouxland to provide a variety of foods that are both nutritious and flavorful. Much of the food we provide for our agencies is received as generous donations that might not meet everyone’s idea of healthy and nutritious. Therefore, let moderation be your health guide and consume reasonable portions of a variety of food groups as recommended by the USDA’s My Plate Food Guide. We hope this brochure helps bring clarity to food labeling.

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**FOOD BANK OF
SIOUXLAND**

Decoding Food Labels



**NUTRITION GUIDES
FOR THE 21ST
CENTURY**

tel. 712-255-9741

What do the labels mean?



Fresh produce is always a good choice.

Paying attention to and comparing food labels is good advice, but not all words are created equal. Some terms are backed by

law; others sound official but could mean anything—or nothing. Use this guide to translate shelf talk and shop healthier.

“multigrain”

It means chips, bread, cereal or crackers contain 2 or more grains. But they’re not necessarily whole grains, which are better nutritionally than refined ones. Refined grains (such as white bread or wheat breads that aren’t specifically labeled “whole wheat”) have had the nutrient and fiber-rich parts milled out. The recommendation is to make sure at least half of your daily grains are whole.

Tip: Whole-grain products list the word *whole* (as in “whole wheat” or “whole oats”) among the first few ingredients.

“made with real fruit”

“Real fruit” doesn’t always mean whole fruit. It might mean juice or extract which could contain fewer nutrients or more sugar than whole fruit does. **Shop Smart:** The only way to figure out the amount of whole fruit is by examining the order of ingredients. Don’t be impressed unless fruit-not fruit juice—is in the first three ingredients.

“low calorie or light”

To determine if food labeled light truly is, you’ll need to compare the nutrition facts with its regular counterpart. A “low calorie” food, per the FDA gives you 40 calories or less per serving, but “light” doesn’t have a strict definition. A product could have a light flavor or texture or color. Light corn syrup for instance is lighter in color. Also, check the price. A light version can be more expensive since you’re paying for the perceived “health halo.”

“low fat” or “reduced fat”

Foods labeled “low fat” are required by the FDA to deliver fewer than 3 grams of fat per serving. “Reduced fat” means the food must have at least 25 percent less fat

than the original form. Low or reduced fat isn’t always best. There



Fresh fruits like kiwi are delicious and nutritious.

may be nutrition trade-offs: Reduced fat peanut butter, for example, may contain more sodium and sugar to boost flavor. Compare the label before you buy.

“natural”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) stipulates that any meat, poultry, or egg product labeled “natural” must contain no artificial ingredients or added color and can only be minimally processed meaning it can undergo only processes that preserve it, make it safe, or separate it into parts, such as grinding up beef. It may however, contain additives or flavor enhancers, such as broth. For products other than meat and eggs, the term isn’t regulated, so “natural” foods could contain some ingredients or preservatives that might not be considered healthy. **Tip:** The label “natural” doesn’t necessarily mean good for you. A stick of butter wrapped in bacon is natural.

“reduced sugar” “low sugar” or “no sugar added”

These labels don’t necessarily mean “low calorie.” “Reduced sugar means the product contains 25 percent less sugar than the original form. “Low sugar” isn’t a regulated term and can mean anything. “No sugar added” simply means that no sugar was introduced during the preparation, cooking, or baking process, not that the product is low in sugar. It may contain fructose, which shows up as “sugar” on the nutrition-facts label.

Tip: Think in teaspoons: Four grams of sugar is about 1 level teaspoon or 16 cal.