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September Newsletter



SWEET SWEET SUGAR

A lot of media focus has been centered around sugar and its effects on the human body. It can be confusing trying to sort through the info and determine how much sugar and what types are recommended to keep children happy and healthy. Read to learn more about sugar and children's health!



HOW MUCH SUGAR SHOULD CHILDREN HAVE IN A DAY?

The World Health Organization published guidelines in 2015 recommending children have no more than **10%** of their **daily energy** intake as **free sugar**. For a 1000, 2000 or 3000 calorie diet that would include 25, 50 or 75g of added sugar per day. WHO defines **free sugar** as monosaccharides, disaccharides (this includes table sugar, coconut sugar, brown sugar, molasses etc.) that are added to foods or beverages along with sugar in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit concentrates.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF TOO MUCH SUGAR IN A CHILD'S DIET?



- High sugar diets are associated with an increased risk of dental caries in children.
- In addition, diets high in sugar sometimes replace more nutrient dense food options in a child's diet. For example if children consume soda or other sugar sweetened beverages they may not drink any milk that day and thus may not get enough calcium or vitamin D.

ARE SOME SUGARS BETTER THAN OTHERS?

Some sugars contain extra vitamins and minerals, for example blackstrap molasses has iron, honey contains some vitamin C and B vitamins, coconut sugar has iron, magnesium and zinc and maple syrup has extra potassium. However, they all still contain carbohydrates in the form of simple sugars which will contribute to raising blood sugars.

WHAT IS THE DEAL WITH SUGAR ALCOHOLS?

Sugar alcohols are synthetically or naturally occurring sweeteners which mimic sugar molecules and taste sweet but cannot be digested fully by the human body. This means they are low in calories and do not raise blood sugar levels or contribute to dental caries. While there is limited research to date on sugar alcohol intake and its impact on children, what we do know is high intakes of sugar alcohols can cause diarrhea, cramps and GI distress. In addition, sugar alcohols should not be used to replace more nutrient dense options and foods containing sugar alcohols are not always packed with the nutrients children need.