

## Supermarket Confusion: 'One Sweet App'

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(Photo: Fotolia)

How much sugar is there in your diet? And how much of it is made up of so-called “free sugars” – of no nutritional benefit?

I have written before about sugar. Not much has changed except you are hearing about reducing your sugar intake more and more. We know that as Canadians we are eating too much ‘added sugars’ or more correctly ‘free sugars’. Sugar gives us energy but not much else. Consuming too much sugar puts us at risk for heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, high blood cholesterol, cancer and of course cavities.

Nutritionally speaking there are sugars ‘with benefits’ and those without. Here is some help understanding sugars.

Free sugars, those without nutritional benefits, include sugar ingredients you find in packaged foods like glucose, fructose, sucrose, brown sugar, honey, corn syrup, maple syrup, molasses, fruit puree and juice etc., as well as the fruit juice you drink and honey and maple syrup that you purchase to add to foods at home.

Sugars with nutritional benefits are found in foods such as fruit, vegetables, milk, grains and other plant-based foods such as legumes and nuts that provide lots of good nutrition.

The challenge is that by looking at the Nutrition Facts table on a food package you will only find the value for total sugars. How are you to distinguish between the free sugars and the other sugars that are providing nutrients along with their calories? For example, I eat Muesli for breakfast most mornings. The nutrition facts table says the product has 10 g of sugar per half a cup. However, when I look at the ingredient listing, the only sugar present is dextrose which is an alternate ingredient used with the dates and therefore would be used in very small quantities if at all. The sugar is coming from raisins, dates and grains. Pretty good product – though if I only looked at the 10 g of sugar, I wouldn’t have chosen this cereal.

Good news... the people who made the recent documentary, Sugar Coated, have now released a mobile application, [‘One Sweet App’](#). With the help of the **University of Toronto, Department of Nutritional Sciences**, the app calculates the amount of free sugars in a food and allows you to count the number of teaspoons of sugar you actually eat. The app is available now, but your help is needed to grow the database before the new year. To start, you do need to have an iPhone. Then you just have to follow the steps below.

1. DOWNLOAD the app – it’s free!
2. Check to see if the product is already there by scanning the barcode. You just line it up with the camera on your phone and it will do it for you automatically.
3. If the product is not in the database, you will be prompted to submit the product.
4. The app then leads you through the steps: A) enter the brand name and product name; B )Take 3 photos— Nutrition Facts table, ingredient list, and front of package; and C) press submit.

An algorithm has been developed to calculate the amount of free sugars in the product. Every submission is validated by a PhD student at the University of Toronto.

**One Sweet App** is brought to you by the makers of Sugar Coated, the documentary. It’s developed by Plank, in collaboration with the University of Toronto, Department of Nutritional Sciences. It’s produced with the participation of the TELUS Fund and TVO, in association with the Canada Media Fund.

The app will be available in FRENCH over the coming weeks. Look for an update!

Remember that organizations like the Heart and Stroke Foundation have recommended that you limit your free sugar consumption to 10 per cent of your daily calories – which is equal to a maximum of 12 teaspoons of sugar if you are consuming a 2,000 calorie diet. ‘One Sweet App’ has aligned itself with

these recommendations. Help is on the way so that you are able to accurately count the teaspoons of free sugars in your diet. Be part of the solution by helping to populate the database for 'One Sweet App'.

For more information about the app, go to: [sugarcoateddoc.com/the-app](http://sugarcoateddoc.com/the-app)