

THE

Sugar-Free Challenge

GUIDEBOOK

30 Days of Tips, Recipes, & Meal
Plans to Kick Sugar Out of Your Life!



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Chapter 1



Preparing to Go Sugar Free

Now that you've made the decision to go sugar free for at least 30 days, there are a few ways to get ready for this Challenge. This chapter will help you set a specific goal, understand the "rules" of the Challenge, and prepare your kitchen for 30 days of clean eating without sugar. As always, you should adapt the rules to meet your specific health situation and goals.

Why Go Sugar-Free?

Most people would likely feel better on a low-sugar or no-sugar diet. But, it can be especially helpful for those having difficulties with blood sugar stabilization or inflammation such as sore joints or chronic pain. This can include those with pre-diabetes, diabetes, PCOS or other hormonal imbalances, or an autoimmune disease.

Who Should Do the Sugar Free Challenge?

People who have diabetes or pre-diabetes should probably be on a sugar free or low-sugar diet, choosing real foods that have a low glycemic index. People who feel they are addicted to sugar, have high levels of inflammation, or who are looking to manage their hormones, energy, or weight could also possibly benefit from reducing or elimination added sugars from their diets.

Even if you don't have a health condition like pre-diabetes, a lot of people can have more energy and even lose a few pounds by doing sugar free for a month. If you feel like you've been over-indulging a little too much with sugar lately, then this is a great opportunity to see what going sugar free can do for you.



Who Should NOT Do the Sugar Free Challenge?

Believe it or not, but there are some people who should not be on a restrictive diet, even one that limits sugar. People who have a serious eating disorder often do not benefit from diet challenges. People who are underweight or who are seriously ill should not do this Challenge. Please do consult your healthcare provider before making any changes to your diet or lifestyle.

The “Rules” of the Challenge

I am not generally a fan of diet rules, but there are some guidelines for this Challenge. The main idea is to remove any processed or added sugars from your diet for a period of 30 days. The intent is by removing the sugar completely, that you will replace the sugar with healthier options and that your cravings and dependence on sugar will be reduced or eliminated.

What are Added Sugars?

Added sugars are any sugars that are not naturally occurring in the food you’re consuming. Added sugars are often included in processed foods or baked goods and can include sugars such as white or brown sugar, corn syrup, and dextrose or natural sugars like coconut sugar, maple syrup, and honey. Added sugars are commonly found in sweet snacks and candy, but can also be found in sauces, granola bars, non-dairy milk products, yogurt, frozen meals, and countless other processed foods.

It’s best to eliminate processed foods as much as possible to ensure you’re also cutting out sources of added sugar. If you do choose to purchase processed foods, be sure to read labels and familiarize yourself with the names that sugar hides under. A good rule of thumb is to look for the “Whole30 Approved” label as those products do not have added sugars.

Added sugars can also refer to sugar added into baked goods. For example, banana bread made with just bananas as the sweetener does not contain any added sugars. Banana bread made with bananas and maple syrup does contain added sugars.



What is Not Allowed During Our Sugar Free Challenge

Added sugars, including cane sugar, honey, maple syrup, coconut sugar, brown sugar, molasses, or any other form of sugar that is added to food. See page 46 for a long list of the names that added sugars can be listed on an ingredient label.

What is Allowed:

Fresh fruit, dried fruit (with no added sugar), and 100% fruit juices, assuming that fruit is appropriate for your health. Any other food that has no added sugar.

Questionable “Grey Area” Items:

- Alcohol is allowed such as spirits, wine, and beer, but limited quantities would be recommended since alcohol turns to sugar in the body. No mixed drinks that have added sugar.
- Kombucha is another “grey area” food for this Challenge. If you drink kombucha, try to choose low-sugar options.
- Artificial or non-nutritive sweeteners can be used, but with caution as sweeteners can keep sugar cravings high. See page 45 for a list of acceptable sweeteners.

Do the meal plans include calories?

The meal plans included in this Guidebook are just a guideline. Since every person is different, I have not included calorie goals. The primary objective of the Sugar Free Challenge is to break our dependence on sugar; weight loss is not the primary goal. That said, many people will lose excess weight just by cutting out added sugars. But, please adapt the meal plans to meet your individual needs and objectives.

