

14 'Health' Foods Worse Than a Donut

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Let's not sugarcoat it: We're consuming way too much sugar—but it's not just coming from junk food anymore.

Americans finally figured out that sugar is bad. How bad exactly? High consumption of the sweet stuff has been linked to health issues that range from obesity and type 2 diabetes to heart disease and stroke. And thanks to mounting consumer awareness, sales of the sugar industry's golden child—soda—have declined so much over the past 11 years that 2016 will be the first year in recent history that the per-person consumption of "health-conscious" bottled water will surpass soft drink sales. Sorry not sorry, Coke.

Unfortunately, marketers started to pick up on the fact that people are looking for more healthy options and are now slapping misleading labels of health-centric phrases like "whole wheat," "gluten-free," and "low-fat" on foods that are full of as much (and many times, much more) sugar as a Dunkin Donuts sugar raised donut. (Which, for your reference, is 4 grams.)

These health halos usually cover up a bunch of junk in disguise, which can inevitably get in the way of even your most dedicated weight loss efforts. Here at Eat This, Not That!, we don't want you to fall prey to the health-food guise—which is exactly why we've rounded up some of the sneakiest sources of added sugar. Now you can see for yourself how much sweet stuff has been injected into these fake health foods.

1. Whole-Grain Cereal

Post Honey Bunches of Oats Whole Grain Honey Crunch

Nutrition: 1 cup, 220 calories, 3 g fat (0 g saturated fat), 150 mg sodium, 46 g carbs (4 g fiber, 12 g sugar), 4 g protein

Sugar equivalent of: 3 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

It's not really shocking that cereals with the words "froot" or "chocolatey" splattered on their boxes contain added sugar, but did you know that certain "healthy," "whole grain" cereals are equally devious? When grabbing a box off the shelf, be sure to steer clear of the three C's: crunch, crisps, and clusters. This trio is typically code for clumps of rice held together by sugar and fat, like in these Honey (aka corn syrup and caramel color) Bunches of Oats.

2. Dried Fruit

Ocean Spray Original Craisins

Nutrition: ¼ cup, 130 calories, 0 g fat, 0 mg sodium, 33 g carbs (3 g fiber, 29 g sugar), 0 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 7 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

Fruit is healthy. In moderation, dried fruit can be healthy. But in many cases, these dehydrated chewy pieces of carbs might as well be candy. Not only are the natural sugars more concentrated in dried fruits than fresh, manufacturers will often coat dried fruit in even more sugar. And that's especially the case for these craisins, as cranberries have the lowest sugar content of all fruits, which Ocean Spray took as an open invitation to inject them with as much cane sugar as seven donuts.

3. Salad Dressing

Ken's Steak House Fat-Free Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette

Nutrition: 2 tbsp, 70 calories, 0 g fat (0 g saturated fat), 260 mg sodium, 16 g carbs, 0 g fiber, 12 g sugar

Sugar Equivalent of: 3 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

They might be marketed as "light" and "fat-free," but these salad dressings are loaded with salt and sugar to compensate for the lost flavor when companies cut out the fat. Both ketchup-based dressings—like French, Russian, and Thousand Island—as well as fruity vinaigrettes like pomegranate, raspberry, and even Ken's sun-dried tomato, will typically include more added sugar than you might assume. Like, three donuts in only two tablespoons more than you'd assume.

4. Fruit Yogurt

Yoplait Thick & Creamy Peaches 'n Cream

Nutrition: 1 container, 180 calories, 2.5 g fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 110 mg sodium, 31 g carbs (0 g fiber, 28 g sugar) 7 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 7 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

Yes, some of the sugar in dairy yogurts is naturally-occurring in the form of lactose, but it's the added sugar typical of fruit yogurts that you need to watch out for. While many fruit-on-the-bottom yogurts can attribute some of those extra sugars to real fruit pieces, Yoplait can't make the same claim for this Peaches 'n Cream flavor. The peach is just "natural flavor," food coloring, and sugar.

5. Fruit Juice

Langers Mango Nectar

Nutrition: 1 cup, 140 calories, 0 g fat, 15 mg sodium, 35 g carbs (0 g fiber, 35 g sugar), 0 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 9 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

Just because fruit is healthy doesn't make fruit juice a waist-friendly pick. And labels that claim "made from real fruit" doesn't mean much, other than the fact that at some point at least one slice of fruit came in contact with this concoction. This one from Langers is mostly filtered water, with some mango puree, citric acid, natural flavor, and lots and lots of sugar. Be wary of juice "cocktails," which is code for "loaded with sugar." Look for juices that are 100 percent fruit juice, or, better yet, whip up one of these 50 Best Detox Waters for Fat Burning and Weight Loss.

6. Granola

Organic Gemini TigerNut Raw Granola: Banana Cacao

Nutrition: 2 oz, 330 calories, 14 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 5 mg sodium, 56 g carbs (14 g fiber, 37 g sugar), 5 g protein **Sugar Equivalent of:** 9 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

Just because granola is usually paired with breakfast's new golden child, yogurt, doesn't mean it belongs in the picture of good health—especially this concoction. Granola is usually clumps of rolled oats stuck together with caramelized sugars, but Organic Gemini's seems to be clumps of sugar disrupted by pieces of tiger nuts. Steer clear.

7. "Skinny" Ice Creams

Skinny Cow Vanilla Caramel Cone

Nutrition: 1 cone, 160 calories, 3.5 g fat (2.5 g saturated fat), 65 mg sodium, 29 g carbs (2 g fiber, 17 g sugar), 4 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 4 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

It's easy to think that ice creams that market themselves as "skinny" are the way to go if you don't want to end up looking like a cow. Especially since many ice creams are loaded with saturated fats. Unfortunately, the answer isn't light ice cream—it's eating moderate portions of

the normal stuff. "Skinny" ice cream is loaded with inflammatory oils, sweeteners, and chemicals to give it taste without all the added calories.

8. 100-Calorie Snack Packs

Nabisco 100-Calorie Pack, Oreo Thin Crisps

Nutrition: 1 pack, 100 calories, 0 g fat, 150 mg sodium, 19 g carbs (1 g fiber, 8 g sugar), 1 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 2 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

Calories may be key to losing weight, but they shouldn't be your guide to choosing which foods to eat. And that's certainly the case for these Oreo Thins. Sure, they might only be 100 calories and can help you stick to your diet plan, but that doesn't mean they're "healthy." With the two-donuts worth of health-harming sugars, you could end up being skinny fat if you make these a daily indulgence.

9. Whole-Grain Bread

Pepperidge Farm Honey Wheat Whole Grain Bread

Nutrition: Per 1 slice, 110 calories, 2 g fat (0.5 g saturated fat), 110 mg sodium, 21 g carbs (3 g fiber, 4 g sugar), 5 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 1 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

It doesn't really matter how many whole wheats or grains you have, no slice of bread should have the same amount of sugar as a donut. Don't be fooled by this classic marketing technique that feeds off of many people's well-founded avoidance of refined, white flour. Companies try to replicate the same sweet taste consumers love from simple-sugar-laden white breads by stuffing whole grain loaves with even more sweet stuff. Make sure you're grabbing the right loaf with our guide, 20 Best&Worst Store-Bought Breads.

10. Energy Bars

Clif Bar Carrot Cake

Nutrition: 1 bar, 240 calories, 4 g fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 150 mg sodium, 45 g carbs (5 g fiber, 25 g sugar), 9 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 6 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

If you're recovering from a hard cardio workout, energy bars might be a good option to replenish spent glycogen stores. But if you're grabbing one on the go and munching on them without breaking a sweat, you could be harming your health. Clif Bars, in particular, are teeming with added sugars—which are still bad news even if they are "organic." In fact, the first ingredient is organic brown rice syrup, and also includes organic cane syrup, organic dried cane syrup (aka sugar), and barley malt extract.

11. Smoothies

Odwalla Strawberry C Monster

Nutrition: 1 bottle, 240 calories, 0 g fat, 35 mg sodium, 58 g carbs (0 g fiber, 48 g sugar), 1 g protein
Sugar Equivalent of: 12 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

Homemade smoothies are one thing; store-bought is another. These bottled smoothies overflowing (seriously, 12 donuts worth!?) with sugar, and many might justify it's ok because most is naturally occurring. However, when fruit juice concentrates are added to sweeten products, it's just as bad as adding high fructose syrup, as these natural sugars are lacking in fruit's waist-whittling partner in crime, fiber.

12. Instant Oatmeal

Oat Revolution Maple & Brown Sugar Thick Cut Oats

Nutrition: 1 packet, 160 calories, 2.5 g fat (0 g saturated fat), 210 mg sodium, 32 g carbs (3 g fiber, 13 g sugar), 4 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 3 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

If you don't have 45 minutes to spare in the mornings to whip up a batch of fiber-rich, steel-cut oats, instant oats may feel like your only time-saving solution. (Psst. They're not! Check out the wonder that is overnight oats.) But what they make up for in time saved, they lack in nutrients. And even worse, if you're grabbing a packet of Oat Revolution Maple&Brown Sugar oats, they're also packed with loads of added sugar.

13. Organic Fruit Snacks

Annie's Organic Bernie's Farm Fruit Snacks

Nutrition: 1 pouch, 70 calories, 0 g fat, 35 mg sodium, 17 g carbs (0 g fiber, 11 g sugar), 0 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 3 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

Yes, organic foods are raised without weight-inducing pesticides, but don't let that blindside you to what you're actually picking up. Organic gummy fruit snacks can be just as harmful to your health as "regular" brands of the sweet drops. For example, these Annie's snacks' first ingredient is organic tapioca syrup, then organic cane sugar, and then juice concentrates. If you're craving something sweet, your best bet is to eat the real thing so you can get the satiating fiber and nutrients that come along with it.

14. Sports Drinks

VitaminWater Power-C Dragon Fruit

Nutrition: 20 fl oz bottle, 120 calories, 0 g fat, 0 mg sodium, 32 g carbs (0 g fiber, 32 g sugar), 0 g protein

Sugar Equivalent of: 8 Dunkin Donuts Sugar Raised Donuts

Don't let your need for vitamin C justify this purchase (just pop a couple strawberries!). Vitamin Waters are far from what they're marketed as and should typically only be drunk if you're a marathoner in need of replenishing carbs—not a person sipping on this pink beverage at their

desk. Not only does this bottle serve up just as much sugar as a can of Coke, it also the sugar-equivalent of eight donuts. No amount of vitamins are worth that.