

April 2023

4/3/23: Watch your Sugar, Sugar

People sometimes make comments or ask me how to lose weight. My answer? Start simple. Many people don't realize how many excess calories come from added sugars which are hidden in things like pop, granola bars and muffins. I'm Clarissa Moon here with your Moon Minute.

When I say added sugar, I mean sugar that's actually added to the product, NOT the sugar that occurs naturally like in fruit and milk. Often sugar is added to foods to enhance flavor. There's nothing wrong with that except that added sugars mean added calories with little to no nutritional value.

What are the common culprits? Beverages are a big one- pop, sweet tea, lemonade, energy drinks, some coffee drinks/flavorings. Typical sweets are next (things like brownies and cake) with some nontypical sweets or "hidden" sources of sugar next. Things in this category include granola bars, flavored yogurts and breakfast cereals.

So what to do? First up, always check the label. On your nutrition facts label under carbohydrates you'll find fiber and sugar. Underneath sugar, there's a subheading for added sugars. A good rule of thumb for added sugars is no more than 50 grams a day. Check the % daily value to determine whether a food is "high" or "low" in any nutrient, including added sugars. Generally, 5% or less is considered "low" while 20% or more is considered "high".

That's it! A few little tips for you to watch your consumption of added sugars. Because you're sweet enough already!

For more information visit [dietaryguidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov) or panola.agrilife.org.

https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/DGA_FactSheet_AddedSugars_2021-06_508c.pdf

4/10/23: Salty Slip-Up

KGAS listeners, I just realized I started making the perfect 3 part radio PSA series and didn't even realize it. Two weeks ago I discussed watching your saturated fats, which is one of three key nutrients we need to limit in our diet. Last week I talked about added sugars, which are a second thing to limit. Now this week, I have no choice but to talk about the third thing to limit. Any guesses what that may be?!

I'm Clarissa Moon, and if you guessed SODIUM, you're right!

Sodium is a mineral found in salt. While it is certainly an important mineral for our body to have, too much of it can lead to health problems like high blood pressure. Hypertension may not sound like a big deal because it's so common, but it's also called "the silent killer" for good reason.

First of all, let me say that the daily limit for adults is 2300 mg of sodium daily. However, ideally, we'd like to cap it at 1500 mg. Most of the sodium in our diets actually does not come from table salt but our favorite processed/prepared foods like sandwiches, pizza, tacos and soup. It also hides in other foods that may not really taste salty such as bread, tortillas and salad dressing.

When it comes to limiting sodium, the first step is to be aware and take control of what you're eating. Look for low-sodium dressings, seasonings, and canned foods. Swap your chips for unsalted nuts or fresh produce. One of the biggest things you can do is to prepare more meals at home. It's a big ask, but even if you start small with one meal a week, it can make a big difference over time.

Well, that wraps up my happy little accidental 3-part series on nutrients to limit in your diet! If you'd like more information visit [dietaryguidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov) or panola.agrilife.org.

https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/DGA_SodiumFactSheet_2021-05-26_508c.pdf

4/17/23: Are you an Active Couch Potato?

You've probably heard that adults need 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week, according to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. However, even if you're getting your 150 in on a regular basis, you may not be "in the clear".

I'm Clarissa Moon here with the scoop.

While getting 150 minutes of activity is certainly a big step, and checks the box for reaching your activity goal, research shows that it's also important to consider how much we move *throughout* the day. In other words, if you exercise but are otherwise pretty sedentary, you may need to step it up.

The research I'm referring to looks at cardiometabolic health which accounts for multiple risk factors like blood sugar, BMI, cholesterol, blood pressure and heart disease. One study published this past December looked at participants who got 150 minutes of activity a week and then divided them up by how active they were throughout the day. The most active (or least sedentary) group showed the best cardiometabolic performance.

If you're like me and have a day that's mostly sedentary, try a few of these tips to get you moving more when you can:

- Take short walks whenever possible, like when on the phone
- Take time to stretch and move, even if it's at your desk
- Try some bodyweight exercises to build strength and see if you can just do a few reps every hour
- Stand whenever possible, it burns 3x the calories of sitting!

The struggle is real, even when you're an *active* couch potato. But never fear, because you are not alone and change is possible. For more info, visit [Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less](https://esmmweighless.com) or panola.agrilife.org.

Before I sign off today, I need to give a quick shoutout to my boy EZ! I know you are working hard to improve your eating habits and wanted to give you a special shoutout saying to keep up the good work and thanks for being a loyal listener!

<https://esmmweighless.com/are-you-an-active-couch-potato/>

4/24/23: Insomnia Blues

We all know that nutrition and exercise are foundational for good health, but we often overlook sleep which is equally as important. During sleep, your body is engaged in many complex functions associated with memory, the ability to learn, brain development and cleaning, appetite, immune function and aging. Your body's natural drive for sleep is so strong that it can even overpower the drive to eat.

Odds are, you have probably experienced trouble sleeping at some point during your life. It's a very frustrating problem to try and solve, since there are many factors that can contribute to your ability to sleep. I'm Clarissa Moon here to explain it all in today's Moon Minute.

If you struggle with insomnia, consider the following:

1. Do you consume caffeine, alcohol or big meals before bed? Nicotine use could also be a culprit.
2. Your body is capable of sleep and wants to sleep, even though it may not seem that way at times.
3. Do you have sleep anxiety? Anxious thoughts about sleep, or anything really, can keep your brain aroused and keep you awake. Try to stop the spiral with a calming technique or simple category game like naming a model of car starting with every letter A-Z.
4. Your bed/bedroom should be a haven. Make it a safe, calming space. Avoid screen time when in bed since screens emit bright light that make your brain stay awake. If you're in bed and can't sleep, get up and do something calming for 10-15 minutes in low light and try again.

I hope these hints help you with your insomnia blues! For more information, visit esmmweighless.com or panola.agrilife.org.

<https://esmmweighless.com/reframing-occasional-sleep-difficulty/>