

Yogurt: Healthy Boost of Protein and Calcium or Infusion of Added Sugars?

Yogurt has exploded in the dairy aisle in recent years, especially the Greek variety, and there is a lot of confusing health terminology and marketing around this seemingly healthy food item. Regardless of which brand or style of yogurt you might prefer, it's important to take note of the sugar content in those containers.



Yogurt has naturally containing sugars called *lactose* which is why you will see around 12 grams of sugar in a plain yogurt Nutrition Facts panel. The majority of Americans—kids as well as adults—don't tend eat plain yogurt – and gravitate toward flavored yogurts.

This means we need to aware of the amount of *added sugars* in those flavored yogurt cups or (yikes!) squeeze pouches. Some of them can have up to 26 grams of total sugar or **14 grams of added sugar** (less the 12 grams of naturally-occurring sugars) in a small 6-ounce container.

In addition, many of those yogurt-to-go pouches or other yogurts marketed to children may have additional additives like dyes and artificial colors lurking in there. While electric blue yogurt may seem exciting, it's probably a safer bet to get a plainer version. Also shy away from those yogurts that come with mix-ins like granola, chocolate chips or sprinkles. These items add even more sugar and take away from the natural flavor of the yogurt.

Some tips to cut the sugar without losing flavor:

- Mix in some fresh fruit
- Add whole grain cereal or granola low in sugar
- Try mixing in your own teaspoon of honey or agave
- Try adding a teaspoon of your favorite jam or preserves
- Sprinkle in some flax seeds or chia seeds to get a boost of omega-3s

Look At it This Way:

It is recommended that children consume NO MORE THAN 25g of ADDED SUGAR daily. Some yogurt may provide more than half of those 25g.