

Research Rundown

Article:

Added Sugars in School Meals and the Diets of School-Age Children

What did this study examine?

This study examined levels of added sugar in school meals, and children's dietary intakes at breakfast, lunch and over 24 hours on school days.

School Menu Data Collection:

➔ Provided by school nutrition managers by completing an online menu survey for one school week. The survey included detailed food descriptions, portion sizes and number of portions, and recipes.

Dietary Intake Data Collection:

➔ Collected through 24-hour dietary recall interviews. The interviews were conducted right after lunch. Younger students had a second interview that was conducted the next day with parental assistance.

Key Findings:

Breakfast

- School breakfasts provided an average of **88** calories from added sugars
 - This accounted for **17%** of calories in school breakfasts

Lunch

- School lunches provided an average of **75** calories from added sugars
 - This accounted for **11%** of calories in school lunches

Leading source of added sugars in BOTH school lunch and breakfast: Flavored skim milk (29%)

Additional sources of added sugars in breakfast consumed by school-age children (including foods from home):

Sweetened cold cereals (23%), condiments and toppings (13%), granola bars and toaster pastries (5%), muffins, sweet/quick breads and sugar sweetened beverages (4%), yogurt (3%)

Additional sources of added sugars in lunch consumed by school-age children (including foods from home):

Flavored skim milk (16%), cake (11%), peanut butter sandwiches (7%), candy and condiments (6%), soda (5%), sports/energy drinks, tea/coffee, granola bars/ breakfast bars (4%)

Put it into practice!

- Start working towards a goal of aligning your school breakfast and lunch menus with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, particularly when it comes to added sugar recommendations (less than 10% of calories).
- Establish your own standards for added sugar limits on items served on your menu, such as ready-to-eat cereals and bakery products.
- Decrease the frequency of high-sugar foods offered in your menus.
- Consider preparing items that typically have higher amounts of added sugars in house, such as baked goods, granola bars, and condiments, so you can control the amount of sugar added.

Reference:

Fox MK, Gearan EC, Schwartz C. Added Sugars in School Meals and the Diets of School-Age Children. *Nutrients*. 2021 Jan 30;13(2):471. doi: 10.3390/nu13020471. PMID: 33573299; PMCID: PMC7911531.



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