

# Healthy Living with Fructose Malabsorption

## What is fructose?

Fructose is a naturally occurring sugar found in fruits, honey, and some vegetables. The consumption of fructose by Americans is steadily increasing since high fructose corn syrup is added into a variety of foods. It is used in cane sugar replacement, preservatives, medicine, and to prevent the sandiness in ice cream. It is used as an additive in a wide range of processed foods, candies, soft drinks, ice cream, baked goods, and dessert goods. Fructose is two to three times sweeter than ordinary sugar. Due to its slower absorption and breakdown rate it doesn't increase glucose levels as dramatically as sucrose (ordinary sugar). For this reason, fructose is often substituted for sucrose.

## What is fructose malabsorption?

Humans are not well equipped to handle a large amount of dietary fructose, and those with fructose malabsorption are unable to break down fructose as quickly, especially when consumed in moderate to large quantities. Therefore ingestion of fructose results in malabsorption of this sugar, resulting in a variety of symptoms:

- ◆ Bloating
- ◆ Abdominal pain and/or cramping
- ◆ Nausea and/or vomiting
- ◆ Diarrhea
- ◆ Headache

## How do you treat fructose malabsorption?

If you are found to have dietary fructose intolerance, you should avoid foods containing high fructose corn syrup, commercially baked goods, and certain fruits that are naturally high in fructose. It's important to not that everyone with fructose malabsorption experiences different levels of malabsorption, and it is dose-dependent. In other words, small amounts of fructose may be tolerated, while larger amounts

are not. The best rule of thumb is to maximize the tolerated amounts of fruits and vegetables, and avoid commercially prepared drinks and sweets.

## What other types of sugar should be avoided?

Those with fructose malabsorption should avoid sorbitol, which is a sugar substitute that may be added into low sugar foods and gum. Sorbitol can produce similar symptoms such as diarrhea, gas, and cramping. It is also recommended to limit the amount of Splenda intake since this sugar substitute breaks down into sucrose and fructose.

---

## Amounts of Fructose in Different Foods

### Low amounts of fructose (consume in small amounts)

#### Fruits

*The following fruits contain up to 5 grams of fructose per serving:*

Apricots, avocados, bananas, blueberries, cantaloupe, carambola (star fruit), cherries, cranberries, currants, dried dates, honeydew, grapes, grapefruit, guava, kiwi, lemons, limes, nectarines, passion fruit, peaches, pineapple, plums, raspberries, rhubarb, strawberries, oranges.

#### Grains/Cereals

*The following contain 0-2 grams of fructose per serving:*

Bran flakes, corn flakes, rice crispy, wheat bran flakes, shredded wheat, millet, most pastas, popcorn, rice, flour, corn meal, some tortillas.

#### Meats and Poultry

All are OK to consume, unless they have been processed with various forms of sugar or are honey treated.

### **Nuts/Seeds**

All nuts contain zero to trace amounts of fructose, unless they are honey roasted.

### **Sweets**

*The following sweets contain up to 3 grams of fructose per serving.*

Brown sugar, caramel, maple syrup, chocolate syrup, hot fudge, pancake syrup, corn syrup. Okay to consume aspartame and saccharin.

### **Vegetables**

**(Trace amounts of fructose)** Alfalfa sprouts, artichokes, borage, broccoli, cooked Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, chives, garlic, horseradish, mushrooms, lettuce, parsley, peas, peppers, potatoes, radishes, spinach, sweet potatoes, turnips, water chestnuts, yams, soybeans.

**(up to 5 grams per serving):** Asparagus, beans, carrots, corn, cucumber, eggplant, leeks, pumpkin, rutabaga, squash, tomatoes.

### **Beverages**

*The following contain up to 5 grams of fructose per serving.*

Beer, brandy, coffee, rum, tea, vodka, whiskey sour, wine, vegetable juice, fast food shakes (strawberry, chocolate, and vanilla), cranberry juice, grapefruit juice, and grape juice. Diet soda generally contains no fructose.

---

---

### **Foods containing a moderate amount of fructose (avoid as much as possible):**

\*Read labels carefully for high fructose corn syrup. If this ingredient is found within the first several ingredients, it should be avoided.

### **Fruits**

The following foods contain 6 to 15 grams of fructose per serving.

Blackberries, mangos, papaya, most canned fruit, pears, prunes, pomegranates, apples, watermelon.

### **Beverages**

The following foods contain 6 to 15 grams of fructose per serving.

Beer cooler, ginger ale, root beer, most canned fruit drinks, punch, wine coolers, thirst quencher drinks such as Power Aid and Gatorade, apple juice, orange juice.

### **Sweets**

The following foods contain 6 to 15 grams of fructose per serving.

Fruit cake, canned frosting, honey, regular molasses.

---

---

### **Foods containing high amount of fructose (avoid):**

#### **Fruits**

The following foods contain 15 to 50 grams of fructose per serving.

Fruit cocktail, dried apricots, peaches, figs, raisons, canned pineapple, applesauce.

#### **Beverages**

The following foods contain 15 to 50 grams of fructose per serving.

Cola (Coke, Pepsi, Dr. Pepper/Mr. Pibb), lemon-lime carbonated beverages, pear juice, prune juice.

#### **Other**

The following foods contain 15 to 50 grams of fructose per serving.

Many low fat yogurts, dressing, ice cream, prepared baked goods/sweets, various processed foods, tomato puree, fruit pies, jellies, jams, etc.