



emphasis

The Uchee Pines Institute health and news letter



The Straight Truth About Sugar

Sugar is an essential component for our body. Glucose, a simple sugar, is the energy source that our cells need in order to function. Yet too much sugar is not good for us.

There are two common types of sugar: “Added sugars” and syrups are added during processing or cooking (such as table sugar, honey, brown sugar, corn syrup, and fruit juice concentrate).

“Natural sugars” are naturally present in whole foods such as fruit (fructose). These typically come with fiber, water, or protein, which changes how

they affect you compared with added sugar. On a nutrition label, “total sugars” includes both added and natural sugars.

What is sugar’s effect on the immune system?

Our immune system is the bodies’ first line of defense against microbes that can harm us. Sugar can affect the immune system mainly by inciting blood sugar swings, promoting inflammation, and influencing gut bacteria—especially when sugar intake is high and chronic.

Large amounts of added sugar can raise glucose quickly, which may impair aspects of immune function (including how well certain immune cells respond) and can worsen inflammation over time. Diets high in added sugars are associated with higher levels of pro-inflammatory signals, which can make the immune system more “activated” than it should be.

Frequent high-sugar intake can shift gut bacteria in ways that may reduce the gut’s barrier function and

alter immune signaling (the gut is a prominent immune organ).

High added sugar (as well as refined carbohydrates) also contributes to weight gain and insulin resistance, and those metabolic changes are linked to a higher risk of chronic inflammation, which indirectly affects immunity. Repeated high added-sugar intake (especially from sugary drinks, desserts, and highly refined carbs) is where negative immune effects are more likely.

In the United States, added sugar is very common, especially in ultra-processed foods. Nearly 90% of Americans' added sugar intake comes from ultra-processed foods. On average, Americans consume 17 teaspoons of added sugar per day, or 60 to 70 pounds per year, for both adults and children. Here are common examples of foods that often contain added sugar:

Sugary drinks: soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened coffee/tea, fruit drinks

Desserts & sweets: cookies, cakes, candy, ice cream, donuts, pastries, flavored yogurt

Breakfast foods: sweetened cereals, flavored oatmeal packets, breakfast bars, doughnuts

Snack foods: granola, flavored chips with sweet coatings, snack cakes

Condiments & sauces: ketchup, BBQ sauce, teriyaki sauce, sweet chili sauce, marinades

Breads & grains: sweetened bread, hamburger buns, certain tortillas/wraps

Dairy & non-dairy products: sweetened yogurt, flavored milk,

sweetened kefir, sweetened plant-based "yogurt"

"Healthy-sounding" items: some flavored oatmeal cups, smoothies, protein bars

When reading US food labels, look for the line "Added Sugars" under Total Carbohydrates (the label also often shows % Daily Value). Low added sugars would typically be under 5 grams per serving; high is often 10+ grams per serving (especially if it's not a small portion).

Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, so if you see sugar, cane sugar, brown sugar, corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, dextrose, maltose, malt syrup, fructose, honey, agave, etc., listed among the first three ingredients, be cautious. That product contains added sugar, even if it doesn't say "sugar" plainly. Also, keep in mind that products promoted as "fat free" or as containing "50% less fat" have often replaced the fat with added sugar.

Be aware that "Total Sugars" includes both added and natural sugars. For fruit items, "total sugars" can be high even when "added sugars" is low—so "added sugars" is the clearer metric. Also, realize that many packages contain multiple servings, so your real intake of sugar should be multiplied by the number of servings you eat.

An occasional sweet treat after a meal is not generally a problem for someone in good health, but let us be mindful to exercise moderation and self-control, even with healthier desserts.

Black Bean Dip

2 (15.5 oz) cans black beans, drained and rinsed

1/2 green bell pepper, chopped

4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped

2 small onions, chopped

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp ground coriander or cumin

2 tbsp lime or lemon juice

3 tbsp water

1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped

Heat olive oil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add onions, garlic, peppers, stir occasionally until soft (about 10 minutes, do not brown).

Transfer mixture to blender or food processor, add black beans, salt, coriander, lime juice, water, cilantro. Blend until smooth. If dip is too thick, add more water or lime juice. Taste and adjust seasonings. Top with fresh cilantro.

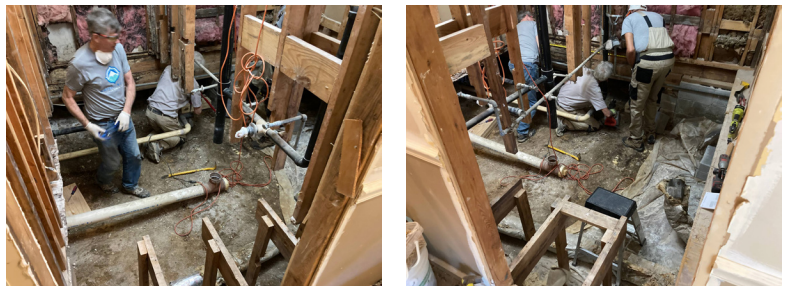


MOTHER- WORT

A perennial herb native to Europe and Asia, Motherwort was brought to North America because of its various medicinal benefits, including cardiovascular health and blood pressure regulation. Noted for its calming and stress-relieving effects, Motherwort also possesses antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties, is an effective treatment for female reproductive health issues as well as menopause, and improves symptoms of anxiety and depression. Motherwort is generally a safe herb to consume; however, it is not recommended for pregnant women.

Guest Housing Improvements

To accommodate our many visitors better and make their stay that much more pleasant at Anvwodi, our guest housing facility (and original lifestyle center), we recently renovated two bathrooms, fixed a sizable part of the floor that was sagging due to damaged floor joists, and added new flooring to the living room area and adjoining hallways. In addition, most of the guest rooms have been upgraded with newer furniture and with Sleep Number mattresses to provide our visitors with a better night's rest. Here are some before and after pictures of the work done by Maranatha volunteers and our own maintenance staff:



To view the current financial needs of Uchee Pines Institute, please go to www.ucheeprines.org/donate

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Do you want to be trained in medical missionary work? Apply today! Lifestyle Educator (6-months or take in 4-wk block) and Lifestyle Counselor (1-yr) courses begin in every January and July. Take the whole course or just one block (4wk).

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Continuing Education Credits – The Lifestyle Interventions with Natural Remedies for Health Professionals Conference offers continuing education for licensed healthcare professionals.

Visit: ucheepines.org/events

Country Life Natural Food Store and Vegan/Vegetarian Restaurant. We ship non-perishable items!

Visit: countrylifeonline.com

Staff Volunteer opportunities

Visit: ucheepines.org/work-opportunities

Current needs of the Institute: Funds for the renovation of men's dorm, road paving, new education building, vehicles for lifestyle center, media suite, refurbishing of existing housing. Visit: ucheepines.org/donate

From our Lifestyle Center **What Our Guests are Saying**

How is my experience at Uchee Pines? It's a blessed, wonderful experience in which I was drawn closer with my God. The staff, the place, the classes, the food, everything is awesome. I am so blessed and I am leaving free of baggage I've been carrying for years. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for you never left me, nor forsook me. Thank you, Uchee Pines staff for being the conduit of God's love to help me find my way back to health, not just physically, but mostly spiritually. -Sim



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