

Why Fruit Should Still Be Included in Low Sugar Diets

Sugar, that evil word that is pushed around in today's society as being bad and harmful. Yeah excess sugar isn't good for you, but this fear of all things sweet has somehow put fruit - pure, wholesome, delicious fruit - onto the "avoid" list. There is absolutely no reason why you should be avoiding fruit, even if you are on a weight loss journey or just trying to limit your sugar intake. Fruit is packed full of good stuff, it is no wonder the Australian Dietary Guidelines tells us to eat 2 servings, EVERY DAY!!! Time to put fruit under the microscope and debunk this "fruit is too high in sugar" BS.

First things first, yes, fruit contains sugar. Natural sugars, not added sugars. And along with that naturally occurring sugar is a whole lot of other stuff. Fruit is jam packed with vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals, all great for your health. But most importantly, fruit is packed with FIBRE and water. This means that fruit is digested slowly and releases sugars into the blood stream much slower than if you were to eat a donut, so the sugars are better metabolised. It also means that fruit can be quite filling, so you don't over consume. As opposed to chocolate, which does not fill you up, and is very easy to consume about 5 rows instead of the 1 row.

Now fruit juice is a different story... Fruit juice contains less fibre and a lot more sugar than whole fruit. Why? Well ever made freshly squeezed orange juice? How much do you get from one orange? Maybe ½ cup, if your lucky. Now who pours themselves half a cup of juice at a time? No-one. So rather than having a single serve of fruit, you are all of a sudden consuming 2,3,4 serves per glass of juice. And because the fibre intake is less, it doesn't fill you up, so you may go back for another glass, meaning you have now had 6-8 servings of fruit, in two glasses of juice. That is a lot more than the recommended 2 serves a day. Dried fruit is similar to fruit juice in that you can easily over consume. Take home message here, fruit juice and dried fruit occasionally, but stick mostly to whole fruit.

There is a huge variety of fruits available all year round. Choosing fruits in season gives you good quality produce, lower in cost, and allows you to add variety to your diet as different fruits come into season. Different colour fruits also contain different vitamins and minerals, so eating a variety of colours can be great for your overall nutrient intake. A serving of fruit is approximately 150g. This equates to 1 medium apple, orange, banana or pear. 2 small apricots, kiwifruits or plums or occasionally ½ cup fruit juice, and 30g dried fruit (which is only about 4 dried apricots). Fruits with edible skin such as apples, pears and berries and also going to give you the highest fibre content, so these are definitely a go to.

So unless you are intolerant to fruit or have a medical reason not to eat the stuff, don't avoid fruit because of its sugar content. Eat it for its vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and health benefits. Whole fruit is convenient, easy to eat on the run, the perfect snack, and an amazing addition to breakfast, salads, or even as a healthy dessert. ENJOY!!!