

NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with PROJECT: PFC's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.

Is the Sugar in Fruit Dangerous to My Health?

Grams per ~3 oz	Total Carbs	Total Sugars	Total Fiber	Free Fructose	Free Glucose	Total Sucrose
Apple	14	10	2	6	2	2
Banana	23	12	3	5	5	2
Grapes	18	16	1	8	7	0
Orange	13	9	2	2	2	4
Carrot	10	5	3	1	1	4
Bell Pepper	6	4	2	2	2	0
Sweet Potato	20	4	3	1	1	3
Table Sugar	100	100	0	0	0	100

"Is Sugar Found In Fruit Bad? I heard bananas are bad for you because of the high amount of sugar, is this true?"

The short answer is NO. However, nutrition is highly individualized, so the answer is a bit more nuanced. To begin, let's take a look at the sugar content of fruit.

The sugars found in fruit are fructose, glucose, and sucrose. Fructose and glucose are monosaccharides, the basic building block of any carbohydrate. Sucrose is a disaccharide, composed of 2 monosaccharides. A sucrose molecule is composed of one molecule each of fructose and glucose.

As you can see in the table, the total sugars in any fruit (or vegetable) is a sum of the fructose, glucose, and sucrose found in the fruit. A banana has 12 grams of sugars, equal to 3 teaspoons. 5 grams are from fructose, 5 from glucose, and 2 from sucrose.

Let's talk about fructose, a sugar of concern for some people. Although it is almost identical to glucose, fructose is metabolized primarily in the liver. Some research indicates that an excess in consumption of fructose may lead to weight gain and insulin resistance as well.

However, a review of observational studies published in Journal of the American Medical Association has shown that increased fruit consumption is tied to lower body weight and a lower risk of obesity-related diseases.

This is because fruit is not fructose; it comes with fiber, which slows down the absorption of sugars in the body. Fiber is one of the main reasons to eat fruit. Besides taming the effects of sugars, it helps promote satiety. Lastly, it improves the diversity of our gut microbiome.

Most people do not eat enough fruit. The recommended intake is 1.5 – 2 cups, yet less than 13% of Americans consume this amount. We're talking about 2 fruits a day! A banana counts as one cup, as does a medium apple. Having a banana in the morning and an apple for an afternoon snack is not dangerous to your health. It's good for you!

That said, if you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, your body is more sensitive to sugars of any type, even if ingested with fiber. In such cases, you should limit your fruit and sweet vegetables intake to focus more on leafy green vegetables. Always consult with a health professional if you are unsure.

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