

# Kick The Sugar Challenge



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Fast  
Easy  
Answers to guide you on  
your **28-Day Kick The  
Sugar Challenge!**

# Kick The Sugar Challenge:

## FAQs

### What exactly IS the Kick The Sugar Challenge?

The Kick The Sugar Challenge is a comprehensive program where we learn how to eliminate as many sources of sugar (even natural) as possible so that we can recalibrate our systems, form new habits, engage in new behaviours and build a new foundation upon which we will improve our health and wellbeing.

Although weight loss and improved health is expected, our goal is to learn how to soothe our emotions without sugar and to educate ourselves on the many places sugar hides in the Standard North American diet. Our focus is on sugar sensitivity; it is a big enough concern.

When we eat sugar, we are hurting our bodies. We are contributing to their internal breakdown while at the same time we are changing their outward appearance.

If you are here, then sugar has been both a constant source of stress and anxiety, while also being the thing you reach for to comfort yourself.

Throughout this Challenge, **we are going to learn new ways of behaving and we are going to focus heavily on loving ourselves and respecting our bodies.** We are going to do this with a group of like-minded people who are on the same journey.

### **If I am cutting out all sugar, do I still have To Do ALL Of The Homework Exercises?**

The exercises have been created to build upon each other and inform your journey. They are all highly recommended and will support your success on the Challenge. Quitting sugar is one step in the process. If we focus only on that step, we are at a high risk for relapse. Getting to a place of understanding about WHY we have used sugar, and finding new ways of coping, are keys to our happiness in life. This is what the assignments help you to do...to find freedom.

**What do I need to buy to get started on the Challenge?** All that is definitely recommended is a lemon reamer (it will save you money when you are able to ream a lot of juice from just half a lemon!) for our morning lemon water ritual, and Swedish Bitters. These are taken 15 minutes before each of your 3 daily meals for one week only. You can take them off the spoon or in a bit of water. One 100 ml bottle is perfect for one person for one week. They have a short shelf-life (6 weeks), so only use them for one week every few months and be sure to finish the bottle or discard once done. Mary's Swedish Bitters is a good brand.

**I am pregnant or breastfeeding. Can I do the Challenge?** Yes, eating healthy and cutting out sugar are excellent ways to keep yourself and your baby healthy. But avoid the bitters with senna. You may be able to tolerate bitters without senna—the laxative—but please check with your doctor first. St. Francis Canadian Bitters is a good brand that doesn't contain senna.

## **ALCOHOL**

**Can I drink alcohol on the Challenge?** No. We are detoxing the liver, and the last thing we want to do is make it work extra hard to process a glass (or two) of wine. Plus, alcohol breaks down to sugar almost immediately. Some call it "liquid sugar".

## **CAFFEINE**

**Can I drink coffee/tea on the Challenge?** Although it would be great for you to cut it out completely, you are able to have one cup of coffee/tea a day. Although it doesn't contain sugar, coffee and tea spike blood sugar (due to the caffeine), and I am committed to helping you keep your blood sugar stable in order to ward off cravings.

**What about energy drinks?** No. They are high in sugar, artificial sweeteners and caffeine.

## DAIRY

**Can I drink milk or eat cheese on the Challenge?** No. No dairy is allowed on the Challenge. Dairy contains sugar (lactose).

**What about Greek yogurt?** Although Greek yogurt is considered a healthy protein, we will avoid it for the 28 days on the Challenge as it is a dairy product.

**What about goat cheese?** No. Although Goat milk is often tolerated well by most people, goat milk is still dairy, so we avoid it.

**Can I put cream in my coffee/tea?** No. Cream is dairy. We can use almond milk or coconut milk in coffee/tea and recipes.

## FRUITS & VEGETABLES

**Which veggies are ON and which are OFF the Challenge?** I posted this link in the Facebook group (you should SERIOUSLY join us!! There is SO MUCH cool stuff going on!!!) and I share it here as well. Eating lots of leafy greens, lots of bitter greens (raddichio, endive, fris , mustard greens, collard greens), lots of cruciferous vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, Brussels sprouts) and staying away from starchy vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash, green peas—just the ones in the inedible pod) is the basic rule.

Here is the link: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_non-starchy\\_vegetables](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_non-starchy_vegetables)

**What are the starchy vegetables we avoid?** We stay away from potatoes, sweet potatoes, beets, carrots, green peas (the ones in the inedible pods), and Winter squash like pumpkin, butternut squash and spaghetti squash. Winter squash have hard exteriors that we don't eat. "Summer squash", on the other hand, are the little yellow zucchini. Use them if you like (if you can find them!) and of course, we use green zucchini on the Challenge.

**What is starch?** The body responds to starch the same way it does to sugar, and so when we eat a potato or sweet potato, even though they are healthy, they produce a "sugar-response" in the body. We want to remove as many sugar responses as possible to limit the amount of insulin that is released by the pancreas.

**Are tomatoes allowed on the Challenge?** Yes. I know they are higher in natural sugar than other vegetables (because, of course, they are a

fruit), but they are non-starchy and a great source of lycopene (which is great for our skin). They are wonderful additions to many dishes, as well.

**I see peas are starchy, but can we eat sugar snap peas and snow peas?** Yes, Sugar snap peas and snow peas have edible pods and are a non-starchy variety of peas.

**Can I eat fruit on the Challenge?** No. We will discuss a re-introduction of fruit on Day 14, but for the first two weeks, there is no fruit. Fruit contains sugar (glucose and fructose). Although fruit is good for us, we are re-training our taste buds to notice natural sweetness. Eating more bitter on the Challenge is helping us with that, as well!

**Can I eat dried fruit on the Challenge?** No. Dried fruit has even more sugar than fresh because it is concentrated as there is no water content. In fact I encourage you to use dried fruit sparingly once we complete the Challenge.

**I see lemon water is required to drink every morning. If I prefer limes over lemons, can I swap it?** Yes. Feel free to swap them out. I sometimes use both in my warm water, but mainly use limes in my cold drinking water throughout the day. You choose! :)

**If I don't tolerate citrus well, what should I drink in the morning instead of warm lemon water?** You can add 1 tablespoon of Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) in warm water and drink it with a straw, first thing in the morning.

If you can't do vinegar, try grating ginger into warm water.

If you can't have any of these, simply drink a tall glass of water. The point is, you must re-hydrate the body upon waking.

**Why do you suggest drinking lemon water (Or ACV water) with a straw?** Lemons and vinegar are acidic, and while LOTS of other beverages are also acidic (wine, juice, coffee, tea, dairy), it is a good idea to protect our tooth enamel. I like to use a re-usable glass straw you can find at health food stores. 😊

**I am allergic to avocados. What can I do to still have The Feel Your Best Breakfast Smoothie?** Omit the avocado, reduce the water by ¼ cup and add in ¼ of coconut milk (from the can) and 4 ice cubes.

I am allergic to avocados AND coconut! What can I do to still have The Feel Your Best Breakfast Smoothie? Omit the avocado, add another tablespoon of hemp hearts and 4 ice cubes. Try squeezing in the juice of a lime, as well.

## SUPPLEMENTS

**Should I take a multivitamin every day?** I like that we eat our vitamins on this plan, so a multi is not necessary. If you insist, take one that is in liquid form, as the others are a waste of money...we just pee them out! That's why your urine is so yellow.

**Should I take Vitamin D?** Yes. Most people are deficient and being low affects our bone health as well as our mental health. I take 3,000 IUs of it every day, based on my doctor's recommendation. If you want to have your blood work done to test, please do and then buy your Vitamin D at Costco. Great price!

**Are there any other supplements I should take?** A high quality probiotic such as acidophilus is a great idea for a lot of people. It must be high quality, found in the fridge at health food stores. They can restore gut health and improve bowel movements. We also take Swedish Bitters for the first 7 days, which aids digestion/elimination along with curbing sugar cravings.

**In the "Feel Your Best Breakfast Smoothie", can I swap Maca for Ashwagandha?** I look at Maca as an "upper" and Ashwagandha as a "downer". Maca gives us energy and increases blood circulation and libido--all great things! It costs about \$27 a bag for the Organika brand of gelatinized Maca (the one I prefer). As long as you are taking it 4 days on, and then one or two days off, it works really well (do NOT take it every single day), but it can also tax the adrenal glands. So, if you need calming, better sleep, and to be more relaxed, I would suggest Ashwagandha instead (\$10 a bag at Bulk Barn for the Organic Traditions bag).

## RECIPES AND SHOPPING

**What CAN we eat on the Challenge?**

We eat LOTS of non-starchy vegetables and we eat protein at every meal. Check out the shopping list and recipes section for ideas and suggestions. Remember this list of veggies we can eat lots of!

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_non-starchy\\_vegetables](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_non-starchy_vegetables) and see below for protein options.

**Do I have to only eat recipes from the Recipe Guide?** No! These are just ideas and suggestions for you to try and draw inspiration from. Make your own soups, stews, and dishes, but just make sure you are not using prepared sauces and that you know all of the ingredients going in are Challenge-approved (i.e. no starchy vegetables like potatoes and sweet potatoes, no dairy, no processed products, no sauces like mayo or BBQ sauce etc.)

**The shopping list doesn't have all of the ingredients I need for certain recipes. Why?** The shopping list is meant to serve as a starting point; it will help you get stocked up but please read through a recipe to determine what you need.

## PROTEIN

**What protein can I eat on the Challenge and what should I avoid?** I highly encourage you to buy only local, organic, grass-fed, hormone-free meat as often as possible. Buying at your farmer's market or from an organic butcher is best. Costco is carrying organic whole chickens, salmon and ground beef.

**LOTS:** Chicken, chicken eggs, duck eggs, wild salmon, turkey, game meat (elk, bison, venison), beef (once or twice a week), nuts, seeds, hemp hearts.

**LIMITED:** Pork, lamb, shellfish, canned salmon/tuna, other fish, Cashews, Pistachios, Pine Nuts.

**NO:** Deli meat, bacon, ham, processed meats, salted or cured meats, protein powder, Soy products (other than tempeh if vegan), "fake" meat (Vegan "meats"), Peanuts (often toxic; prone to mold)—peanuts are the only nuts you must avoid completely on the Challenge. Afterwards, please only buy organic peanuts and peanut butter.

## GRAINS

**Are grains allowed on the Challenge?** No. That said, we will reintroduce quinoa in the 4th week.

**What about rice?** No. Rice is a grain.

**Is bread allowed on the Challenge?** No. Bread is made from grains.

**Not even whole grain or gluten-free bread?** No. Bread is a simple carbohydrate that turns into sugar quickly.

**Is pasta allowed on the Challenge?** No. Pasta is made from grains like corn and wheat.

**What about gluten-free pasta?** No. It is made from grains.

**What about popcorn?** No. Corn is a grain.

**What about quinoa crackers or rice crackers?** No. These products are processed and they are made from grains.

**What about flour?** The only flour allowed on the Challenge is Almond flour. Almond flour is simply ground up, blanched (skin removed) almonds.

## FATS

**What about oils? What can we use on the Challenge?** The best oils to use are organic, cold pressed, extra virgin olive oil(EVOO); organic virgin coconut oil; and avocado oil. I also like Red Palm oil, but make sure it is sustainably sourced.

**I have heard that coconut oil is high in saturated fat. Why do you say we should eat it?** Coconut oil is a medium chain triglyceride, which is almost impossible to get elsewhere. Yes, the fat is saturated (solid at room temperature) but the fat in coconut oil goes straight to the liver, boosting our metabolism. It stimulates the thyroid and helps us to burn fat, especially belly fat! It also boosts our immune system and helps reduce blood sugar. It is a superfood, and I highly recommend you eat a teaspoon a day, right off the spoon (or in coffee) and work your way up to a max of say 2 tablespoons.

## PROCESSED FOODS

**Can I eat processed foods?** If you are reading a box, a container, or a bag and the Ingredients list has more than one or two ingredients, it is probably a no. For example, tuna in the can has tuna and water. That's ok. But a box of crackers or a pack of bacon is a no.

We pretty much eliminate any packaged or processed food on this Challenge. Home-made is ALWAYS better and I want you to get used to knowing what is in everything you put in your body. Please focus more



on **Ingredients labels** than **Nutrition labels**. I would always prefer you to make your own (i.e. salad dressing) but if the ingredients are all natural and there is no sugar, then go for it.

**What about condiments?** Condiments often have a lot of sugar (like BBQ sauces, hot sauces, and ketchup) and many are highly processed (like mayonnaise). Yellow mustard and Dijon are allowed because they contain no sugar and have very few ingredients. Even though there is vinegar in mustard, we allow it on the Challenge. Check your ingredients labels (NOT the nutrition labels) to see what is in a condiment to make your decision.

**What about sugar-free or “zero-calorie” drinks? Are they allowed?** No. No artificial sweeteners are allowed. The only drinks on the Challenge are one cup of coffee/tea per day, water, herbal tea, sparkling water.

## **VEGETARIAN/VEGAN**

**I am a vegetarian. What can I eat?!** I realize this Challenge is meat-heavy. I know, and I'm sorry. Although I would have liked to limit legumes as they are quite starchy, I kept them on because I love you vegetarians, as well. :) I provided a few, but look online for all sorts of great vegetarian recipes!

**I am vegetarian. Can I eat tofu?** I avoid all soy products. It is highly processed, almost always genetically modified, and affects our hormones negatively. If you must eat soy, please eat tempeh, which is fermented tofu.

**I am Vegan. Can I do this Challenge?** Although I respect people who choose a Vegan lifestyle for moral reasons, I am not a fan of the vegan diet that typically includes a lot of soy, corn and nutritional yeast. Vegans are often low in Iron and B12 due to their elimination of all animal products.

If you are vegan, I highly encourage you to stay away from sugar, but your protein choices are limited to beans, legumes, and tempeh, as I don't encourage tofu or “Franken-meat” (soy-based fake meat.) Please omit nutritional yeast while on the Challenge.

## OTHER

**Is vinegar allowed on the Challenge?** Only Raw, Apple Cider Vinegar “with the mother” is allowed. You can also enjoy lemon or lime juice instead of vinegar in recipes for salad dressings and marinades.

**Are spices allowed on the Challenge?** Herbs and spices are encouraged! They season food and add zest without sugar. If you are using a store-bought spice blend, look at the Ingredients label and make sure it is made from spices and ingredients you recognize, and be sure there is no sugar added. Watch the sodium, too. I love the Kirkland brand “No Salt Organic Seasoning” from Costco, but it is not always available. I also like Herbamare, but use sparingly as it is high in sodium, and I love Herbes De Provence (also found at Costco). 😊

**If I get a cold, can I take cough syrup or use lozenges?** No. If these products are filled with sugar and even awful-tasting Buckley’s has sugar. Drink lemon water, eat red peppers for the vitamin C, take a teaspoon or more of coconut oil off the spoon, get lots of rest, body brush to move lymph fluid, and continue to move your body. You can take medication for headaches of course, but no cough syrup or lozenges.

**Can I chew gum on the Challenge?** No. Gum is off the Challenge because it contains either sugar, aspartame or both. Plus, gum makes us hungry. When we put a piece of gum in our mouths, we begin to salivate. This is the first stage of digestion as our bodies prepare for food.

When food never comes, we end up feeling hungry, empty, bloated (several people with symptoms of IBS have simply needed to give up gum!) and we end up eating more than we would have; often choosing foods we shouldn't. So, no gum. It's only 28 days, but perhaps this will be a new habit for you forever! :)

If you want fresh breath after a meal, chew parsley, brush (AND FLOSS) your teeth, use a tongue scraper (this will change your life!) or drink lemon water.

**Please let me know if there are other questions you have that were not addressed in this FAQ. I will happily answer them and add them in!**

**Thank you!**