**Sugar in Our Food**

Adapted from the Guardian lesson ideas

**Grade:** 3-5

**Subject/Content Area:** Health

**Assessment:** Observation, completed graph, completed posters.

**Materials:** Snack items in packages with nutritional guides, sugar, measuring utensils, clear bowls,

**Lesson Objectives:** How to identify sugar in packaged/processed foods.

How to read and understand nutrition labels to make better choices.

Why it’s important not to eat too much sugar.

How to identify healthier snack options.

How to use graphs to display data.

**Procedure:**

1. Discuss students’ experiences of how they feel after eating a sugary treat, such as a packet of sweets or drinking a sugary drink, such as a can of cola.

Did they feel full of energy?

What did they do?

Explain that sugar is a quick-release carbohydrate, which is rapidly absorbed into our bloodstream to give us a quick boost of energy. Some sugary foods can make us ‘hyperactive’. However, because the sugar stimulates the body to release insulin, the sugar ‘high’ is followed by a sugar ‘crash’. That’s when you might get grumpy, tired and irritable. Insulin is the chemical that quickly drives down the level of sugar in the blood. Remind students that sugar consumption can make our moods and our energy levels go up and down, like a rollercoaster, show on white board or overhead.

Explain that in a sports situation, students will get a more consistent stream of energy by consuming slower-release foods and also that it is recommended that young people drink water during sport. Students doing a lot of sport might want to consider consuming drinks such as milk or a milk smoothie after sport to promote recovery, rather than sugary drinks. Explain that consuming excess sugar can lead to tooth decay, heart disease and diabetes.

Explain that the recommended intake of added sugars should be no more than 10% of total calorie intake, that is between 50 and 70g sugar per day and there are proposals to halve this recommendation reduced to 24g. Added sugars are sugars that have been added to foods, such as drinks, jam, cereal and cakes. Explain that 4g of sugar is equal to 1 teaspoon.

2. Split into groups of four for larger classes complete in two groups or as a whole for social emotional classes – give each group a different high sugar packaged food product and the sugar content in grams for one portion. Ask each group to weigh out the amount of sugar in a portion of the product, using the bowl and scales provided.

3. Students should transfer the amounts of sugar they have weighed out into bowls to share their results with the class.

4. Discuss with class

5. Based on this experiment, take the daily recommended sugar intake, using the new 24g estimate and calculate, as a class, how many grams of sugar they would be likely to consume with the following food examples and graph. Does the total amount of sugar exceed the recommended guidelines?

- a sugary drink

- a bowl of sugary cereal

- a pack of sweets

- an energy bar or chocolate bar.

- a school breakfast or snack.

6. Create a poster to spread the word to other students on how they can improve their diets and cut down on sugar, post around the school.