



TOP COMPLIANCE (Pty) Ltd

Your Business' Safety Is Our Concern

QSE B-BBEE - Level Four

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The sweet danger of sugar and your safety

Let's start 2024 on a sweet note. Happy new year to you and your loved ones. May your year be filled with many positive experiences.

Sugar has a bittersweet reputation when it comes to health. Sugar occurs naturally in all foods that contain carbohydrates, such as fruits and vegetables, grains, and dairy. Consuming whole foods that contain natural sugar is not a problem. Plant foods also have high amounts of fibre, essential minerals, and antioxidants, and dairy foods contain protein and calcium.

Since your body digests these foods slowly, the sugar in them offers a steady supply of energy to your cells. A high intake of vegetables, whole grains and fruits also has been shown to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancers.

Science has proven that chronic, low-grade inflammation can turn into a silent killer that contributes to cardiovascular disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes and other conditions. Add stress to this and you have a potential ticking time bomb. So how will this affect our safety at work?

1. Consuming excessive sugar can lead to fluctuations in blood sugar levels. This may result in feelings of fatigue, dizziness, sweating, fainting, nausea, vomiting, blurry vision, unsteadiness, lethargy, and a lack of concentration. In a work environment, especially in jobs that require focus and attention to detail, decreased energy levels can pose safety risks. It may increase the likelihood of accidents and errors.
2. Chronic high sugar intake is a risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes. This condition can lead to complications such as neuropathy (nerve damage), which may affect coordination and reaction times. In safety-sensitive jobs, impaired coordination and delayed reactions can be hazardous. Of the 4.58 million people aged 20–79 years who were estimated to have diabetes in South Africa in 2019, 52.4% were undiagnosed. South Africa has the second highest number of people living with type 2 diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa. 12 May 2023. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov> › articles › PMC10218408
3. Excessive sugar consumption is linked to obesity, which can contribute to a range of health issues, including joint problems and decreased mobility. Jobs that involve physical tasks may become more challenging and pose a higher risk of injuries if an individual is dealing with obesity-related health conditions.
4. High sugar intake is associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Cardiovascular issues can affect one's ability to perform physically demanding tasks and may lead to unexpected health events at work.
5. Some studies suggest a link between high sugar consumption and mental health issues, including depression and anxiety. Mental health problems can influence overall well-being and job performance. In high-stress occupations, the impact of sugar on mental health may further exacerbate stress levels and affect decision-making.

6. Excessive sugar intake can weaken the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to infections and illnesses. In work settings where exposure to pathogens or hazardous substances is a concern, compromised immunity can increase the risk of getting sick.

Finding out how much sugar is in the foods we eat.

Reading food labels is one of the best ways to monitor your intake of added sugar. Look for the following names for added sugar and try to either avoid or cut back on the amount or frequency of the foods where they are found such as: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, fruit juice concentrates, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, malt sugar, molasses, syrup sugar molecules ending in "ose" (dextrose, fructose, glucose, lactose, maltose, sucrose).

Total sugar, which includes added sugar, is often listed in grams. Note the number of grams of sugar per serving as well as the total number of servings. Every 5 grams of sugar equals one teaspoon of sugar.

Reducing sugar intake is a praiseworthy goal for improving overall health. Here are some gradual and practical steps you can take to slowly reduce your sugar intake and improving your overall health, happiness and being safer at work:

1. Start by becoming aware of your current sugar intake. Read food labels to identify sources of added sugars in your diet. Pay attention to terms like sucrose, glucose, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, and other sugar-related ingredients.
2. Instead of trying to cut out all sugar at once, make gradual reductions. This approach is more sustainable and allows your taste buds and habits to adjust over time. For example, if you typically add two teaspoons of sugar to your coffee, try reducing it to one teaspoon and then eventually to none.
3. Opt for whole, unprocessed foods. Fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains contain natural sugars along with essential nutrients, fibre, and antioxidants. Replace sugary snacks with healthier alternatives, such as nuts, or yogurt.
4. Sugary drinks are a significant source of added sugars. Gradually reduce your intake of cold drinks, energy drinks, and fruit juices. Choose water, herbal tea, or infused water with slices of fruits for a refreshing and sugar-free option.
5. Be mindful of hidden sugars in condiments, sauces, and processed foods. These can contribute significantly to your overall sugar intake. Rather use homemade sauces and dressings.
6. If you have a sweet tooth, consider enjoying desserts in moderation. Choose smaller portions or share with others to satisfy your cravings without overindulging.
7. Cooking at home allows you to have better control over the ingredients in your meals. You can reduce sugar in recipes or explore sugar alternatives.
8. Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Sometimes, feelings of hunger can be mistaken for thirst, leading to unnecessary snacking on sugary foods.
9. If you feel the need to sweeten your food or drinks, consider using natural sweeteners like honey, or stevia in moderation.
10. Pay attention to portion sizes, especially when it comes to sweets and treats. Smaller portions can help satisfy your cravings without overloading on sugar.

Remember, it's about making sustainable changes that work for you. Gradual adjustments are more likely to become long-term habits. If you have any underlying health conditions or concerns, it's advisable to consult with a registered dietitian or your medical practitioner for personalised guidance.

Embracing a low-sugar diet is not just a commitment to better health; it's a pledge to safeguard your well-being. By choosing whole foods rich in nutrients over processed sugars, you're investing in a foundation of strength, resilience, and sustained energy, creating a safety net for a healthier and more vibrant life.

Disclaimer: No content should ever be used as a substitute for direct medical advice from your dietitian, doctor or other qualified clinician.

COMING NEXT WEEK is the launch of our online academy -

<https://academy.topcompliance.co.za/>

<p><u>Occupational health and safety auditing and consulting</u></p>			<p><u>Online safety shop</u></p>
			
<p><u>First aid equipment</u></p>	<p><u>Signage</u></p>	<p><u>Legal posters</u></p>	<p><u>Safety Equipment</u></p>

Courses offered by Top Compliance (Pty) Ltd

<p>ONLINE ACADEMY - https://academy.topcompliance.co.za/</p>	
<p>Occupational Health and Safety Courses</p>	
<p><u>Safety representative – Legal Liability</u></p>	
<p><u>The Occupational Health and Safety Act & responsibilities of management – Legal Liability</u></p>	
<p><u>Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment</u></p>	
<p><u>Food facility health & safety course in terms of R638</u></p>	
<p><u>Basic Ladder Safety Course</u></p>	
<p>Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses</p>	
<p><u>Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting</u></p>	
<p><u>Fire & Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning</u></p>	

<p>ONSITE TRAINING</p>	
<p>First Aid Courses:</p>	
<p><u>Level 1 - US 119567 - Perform basic life support and first aid procedures</u></p>	<p>2 days</p>
<p><u>Level 2 - US 120496 - Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace</u></p>	<p>3 days</p>
<p><u>Level 3 - US 376480 - Provide first aid as an advanced first responder</u></p>	<p>3 days</p>
<p><u>Level 1 & 2 - US 119567 & 120496</u></p>	<p>3 days</p>
<p><u>Level 1, 2 & 3 - US 119567, 120496 & 376480</u></p>	<p>5 days</p>
<p><u>Level 2 & 3 - US 120496 & 376480</u></p>	<p>3 days</p>
<p><u>Child and infant CPR & choking</u></p>	<p>6 hours</p>
<p><u>Adult CPR & choking</u></p>	<p>6 hours</p>
<p><u>Adult CPR & choking and AED</u></p>	<p>1 day</p>
<p>Occupational Health and Safety Courses</p>	

Safety representative – Legal Liability	1 day
The Occupational Health and Safety Act & responsibilities of management – Legal Liability	1 day
Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment	1 day
Food facility health & safety course in terms of R638	6 hours
Basic Ladder Safety	6 hours
Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses	
Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting	6 hours
Fire & Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning	1 day