

Sugar in Beverages

What is sugar?

The Australian Beverages Council (ABCL) supports the definition of added sugar which is based upon the definition of “sugars” in Clause 1 of Standard 1.1.2 of the Food Standards Code:

- ↗ Hexose monosaccharides and disaccharides, including dextrose, fructose, sucrose and lactose; or
- ↗ Starch hydrolysate; or
- ↗ Glucose syrups, maltodextrin and similar products; or
- ↗ Products derived at a sugar refinery, including brown sugar and molasses; or
- ↗ Icing sugar; or
- ↗ Invert sugar; or
- ↗ Fruit sugar syrup; derived from any source

but does **not include** –

- ↗ Malt or malt extracts; or
- ↗ Sorbitol, mannitol, glycerol, xylitol, polydextrose, isomalt, maltitol, maltitol or
- ↗ Syrup or lactitol.

WHO define the term 'sugar' as including intrinsic sugars, which are those incorporated within the structure of intact fruit and vegetables; sugars from milk (lactose and galactose); and free sugars.

The ABCL does not support the WHO free sugars definition as it includes fruit juices.

There is not sufficient evidence to justify the inclusion of fruit juices as added sugar and does not align with the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

100% fruit juice (including concentrated, that have been diluted), pulps, and purees provided valuable nutrients to the diet. Therefore, should not be considered purely as sugar.

The ABCL also note that the human body metabolises added and intrinsic sugars the same. The nutrient density of the vehicle in which the sugar is carried must be considered.

The ABCL feels that the definition in the Code supports this.

Sugars and health claims

FSANZ stipulates in order to make 'good oral hygiene' claims, the food:

- (a) Is confectionery or chewing gum; and
- (b) either:
 - (i) Contains 0.2% or less starch, dextrans, mono-, di- and oligosaccharides, or other fermentable carbohydrates combined; or
 - (ii) If the food contains more than 0.2% fermentable carbohydrates, it must not lower plaque pH below 5.7 by bacterial fermentation during 30 minutes after consumption as measured by the indwelling plaque pH test, referred to in 'Identification of Low Caries Risk Dietary Components' by T.N. Imfeld, Volume 11, Monographs in Oral Science, 1983.

Sugar and permissible limits

FSANZ stipulates 'sugar' or 'sugars' that are:

'% Free': Must meet the conditions for a nutrition claim about low sugar.

'Low': Contains no more sugars than 2.5g/100mL for beverages.

'Reduced' or 'Light'/'Lite': Contains at least 25% less sugars than in the same amount of *reference food.

'No added': Food contains no added sugars*, honey, malt or malt extract and contains no added concentrated fruit juice or de-ionised fruit juice (excludes: brewed soft drinks, electrolyte drinks, electrolyte drink base, juice blends, formulated beverages, fruit juices, fruit drinks, vegetable juice, mineral or spring water and non-alcoholic beverages)

'Unsweetened': Meets conditions for a nutrition content claim about no added sugar and contains no 'intense' sweeteners, sorbitol, mannitol, glycerol, xylitol, isomalt, maltitol, syrup or lactitol.

Please visit [FSANZ Schedule 4](#) for more information.