

7-Day Anti-Inflammatory Program



The Inflammation Equation: Sodium, Sugar, and Fiber



DAY 2: SUGAR, SALT & HIDDEN TRIGGERS

IDENTIFYING & REDUCING INFLAMMATORY INGREDIENTS IN EVERYDAY FOODS

Welcome to Day 2! Today we're diving into two of the most common—and sneaky—drivers of chronic inflammation: added sugar and sodium. We'll uncover where they hide, how they affect your body, and how to make smart, satisfying swaps.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES



- UNDERSTAND HOW SUGAR AND SALT CONTRIBUTE TO INFLAMMATION
- IDENTIFY HIDDEN SOURCES IN EVERYDAY PACKAGED FOODS
- LEARN BASIC LABEL-READING SKILLS
- DISCOVER REALISTIC FOOD SWAPS THAT SUPPORT YOUR HEALTH

Even when eating “clean,” hidden ingredients can sneak in. Today is about awareness, not judgment—and taking control of your choices.

SUGAR: THE SILENT INFLAMMATION TRIGGER

- Spikes blood sugar and insulin
- Increases inflammatory cytokines
- Promotes visceral fat and oxidative stress
- Linked to metabolic disease, fatigue, and brain fog

Sugar affects more than your waistline. It disrupts hormones, fuels inflammation, and often hides in foods marketed as healthy.





WHERE SUGAR HIDES

- Yogurt, cereal, sauces, dressings
- Protein and granola bars
- “Healthy” juices and smoothies
- Bread, condiments, frozen meals

If you’re eating processed or pre-packaged foods—even “organic” ones—check the label. Sugar hides in places you wouldn’t expect.

SUGAR'S MANY NAMES

Look out for:

- Cane sugar, corn syrup, dextrose
- Brown rice syrup, maltodextrin, agave
- Sucrose, fructose, glucose

If it ends in “-ose,” it’s likely a form of sugar. Learn these aliases to avoid hidden sugars on ingredient lists.



HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

- Women: $\leq 25\text{g}$ (6 tsp) added sugar/day
- Men: $\leq 36\text{g}$ (9 tsp) added sugar/day
- Most people eat 2–3x this amount

The World Health Organization warns that excess sugar is a leading contributor to chronic disease. Start reducing gradually—one meal at a time.



SALT: THE OTHER INFLAMMATION DRIVER

- Raises blood pressure and fluid retention
- Stresses kidneys and vascular system
- Linked to immune dysregulation and inflammation
- Common in processed, frozen, and fast food

Salt isn't inherently bad—but too much, especially from hidden sources, can lead to low-grade inflammation.



WHERE SALT HIDES

- Packaged bread and crackers
- Salad dressings and sauces
- Deli meats and canned foods
- Fast food and frozen dinners

Over 70% of dietary sodium comes from processed foods—not your salt shaker.





HIGH-SODIUM CLUES

- Over 300mg sodium per serving = high
- Ingredients like MSG, sodium nitrite, or “flavor enhancer”
- “Reduced sodium” doesn’t always mean low sodium

If you’re trying to lower inflammation, scan sodium levels as carefully as you do sugar.

LABEL READING BASICS

Look at:

- Serving size
- Total sugar and added sugars
- Sodium (mg per serving)
- First 5 ingredients

Just 10 seconds with a label can help you avoid hidden inflammation triggers and make empowered choices.



COMMON RED FLAGS

- Sugar is one of the top 3 ingredients
- Over 10g of added sugar per serving
- Over 300mg sodium per serving
- Artificial sweeteners or hydrogenated oils

These ingredients create low-grade inflammation and can sabotage your wellness goals—even in small amounts over time.



SMART SUGAR SWAPS

Instead of...	Try This...
Soda	Sparkling water + citrus
Flavored yogurt	Plain Greek yogurt + berries
Candy or granola bars	Fruit + nuts or dark chocolate

Cutting sugar doesn't mean cutting joy. These swaps still satisfy your taste buds—without the inflammatory spike.

SMART SALT SWAPS

Instead of...	Try This...
Packaged dressings	Olive oil + vinegar or lemon juice
Canned soup	Homemade with herbs + low-sodium broth
Instant noodles	Fresh stir-fry with sea salt or coconut aminos

It's not about being strict—it's about finding flavorful alternatives that nourish and heal.

BONUS: FLAVOR WITHOUT THE FALLOUT

Enhance flavor naturally with:

- Garlic, ginger, turmeric
- Vinegars and citrus juice
- Fresh herbs like basil and cilantro
- Nutritional yeast
- Cumin, paprika, cinnamon

These not only taste amazing—they actively reduce inflammation and support digestion and immunity.





YOUR CHALLENGE TODAY

- Read 2 food labels from your pantry or fridge
- Identify sugar or salt content and ingredients
- Make 1 smart swap and write about the experience in your workbook

Start small. Even one new choice today helps reduce your inflammatory load. And you're learning skills you'll use for life.