

Energy Bars, Drinks, and Snacks High in Processed Sugars Decrease Benefits of Exercise

While exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, fueling it with foods high in refined sugars counteracts some of the benefits, adding health risks.

TORONTO, ON, CANADA, August 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the midst of an ongoing "obesity epidemic," health and fitness have become paramount concerns for North Americans. At the same time, refined, processed, and "added sugars" consumption, a known contributor to obesity, in the form of energy snacks and drinks is also increasing. Deloitte's latest report reveals that the gym and fitness industry surged to over \$91 billion USD globally in 2022, up from \$73 billion in 2011, with the United States contributing to more than one-third of the industry's total value. The commitment to exercise programs and physical fitness is on the rise among North Americans,

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High dietary sugar consumption is generally more harmful than beneficial for health, especially in cardiometabolic disease.”

Yin Huang & Dr. Liangren Liu, BMJ 2023;381:e071609

and drinks appears inevitable; after all, athletes require an additional energy boost for their workouts. A substantial portion of energy bars and several popular energy drinks derive much of

Nutrition Facts	
10 servings per container	
Serving size	1 packet (35g)
makes about 16.9 fl oz	
Amount per serving	
Calories	130
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Sodium 230mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 34g	12%
Total Sugars 32g	
Includes 32g Added Sugars 65%	
Protein 0g	
Potassium 70mg	0%
Not a significant source of saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, and iron.	
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per carton	
Serving size	1 bar (60g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 7g	9%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1g	
Monounsaturated Fat 3.5g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 34g	12%
Dietary Fiber 5g	18%
Total Sugars 13g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%	
Sugar Alcohol 0g	
Protein 10g	17%
Vitamin D 0mcg 0%	Calcium 61mg 4%
Iron 2mg 10%	Potassium 15mg 4%
* The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size 1 Waffle (30g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	140
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 6g	9%
Saturated Fat 2.5g	12%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 90mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 21g	7%
Dietary Fiber 1g	3%
Total Sugars 10g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg 0%	Calcium 10mg 0%
Iron 0mg 0%	Potassium 21mg 0%
* The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

It pays to read the Nutritional Facts Label. Check out the added (refined) sugars on this popular energy drink (left), and these two "healthy" energy snacks (middle and right)

and in tandem, the energy bar and energy drink industry has witnessed exponential growth. The energy bar sector, valued at \$645 million in 2020, is projected to experience a 6.4% annual growth, reaching over \$1 billion by 2028. This press release will examine how using energy snacks and drinks may work against your fitness goals and look at what makes raw honey a good alternative, healthy energy to power your exercise.

As more individuals embrace exercise and athletic pursuits, the association with increased consumption of energy bars

their energy content from added processed sugars. The health hazards associated with added refined sugar intake are becoming increasingly difficult to overlook.

Studies have demonstrated that a [diet high in refined sugars can lead to weight gain, obesity, diabetes](#), an increased risk of heart disease, heightened inflammation, atherosclerosis and elevated blood pressure. Moreover, excessive sugar consumption may expedite cellular and skin aging due to the rapid blood glucose spike followed by an insulin surge, leading to a subsequent decrease in energy levels approximately thirty minutes after consumption. Overindulgence in processed sugar has also been linked to an elevated risk of cancer, cognitive decline, including a higher susceptibility to dementia and stroke, as well as an increased likelihood of gout.

While many popular exercise bars and drinks rely on processed sugars for energy, not all energy supplements are equal. It's a good idea to look carefully at the ingredients. Even some that use "honey" in their name, marketing to the health-conscious athlete are packed with processed sugars, with only a token drop of honey for marketing purposes. Others supply energy in healthier forms of fruit and complex carbs. Note that the term "organic" does not mean healthy: Refined "organic sugar syrup" is still an added refined sugar with all the sugar-associated risks.

Considering the substantial risks associated with consuming excess refined sugars, it becomes evident that using processed sugars as a source of energy for cardio exercises is, at best, counterproductive. The impacts of exercise and refined sugars on cardiovascular health, obesity, blood pressure, and diabetes risk stand in opposition to one another. Opting for healthier

USDA ORGANIC **NON GMO** **GLUTEN FREE** **DAIRY FREE**

Ingredients: Gluten Free Flour Blend (Organic Rice Flour, Organic Tapioca Starch, Organic Potato Starch), Organic Brown Rice Syrup, Organic Palm Fruit Oil, Organic Cane Sugar, Organic Eggs, Organic Cocoa, Organic Soy Flour, Organic Honey, Sea Salt, Natural Flavors, Baking Soda, Soy Lecithin, Xanthan Gum, Organic Rice Extract.

Contains Soy and Egg, May Contain Traces of Milk.

INGREDIENTS: Oats, tapioca syrup, soy protein isolate, chocolate chunks (unsweetened chocolate, sugar, cocoa powder, soy lecithin, natural flavor), oat flour, chicory root fiber, canola oil, raisin paste, cane sugar, honey, natural flavor, quinoa, buckwheat, amaranth, millet, sea salt, Vitamin E (mixed tocopherols for freshness).

Allergen Information:
Contains soy.
May contain peanuts and tree nuts.

It also pays to read the ingredients. The word "organic" doesn't relieve refined sugars of sugar-associated health harms. "Tapioca syrup" and "organic rice syrups" are just fancy names for added refined sugar. Note the miniscule amount of honey added for marketing only.

Adding a tablespoon or 2 of raw honey (not sugar!) to a fruit smoothie or protein shake pre and post workout provides "clean", healthy energy. Photo credit: PxHere
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alternatives, such as complex carbohydrates or naturally occurring sugars found in fruits, to fuel exercise sessions is a healthier choice. Notably, raw honey proves to be an especially suitable option, complementing and potentially enhancing various positive effects of exercise.

Although both processed sugars and honey contain similar molecules of simple sugars, the physiological effects on the body are vastly different. The current scientific thinking is that other natural compounds in raw honey, such as bee enzymes or other organic substances affect energy metabolism in various beneficial ways. Raw honey is known to directly stimulate the pancreas to release insulin. Upon ingestion, honey is efficiently converted to liver glycogen, providing the body's immediate fuel supply. Liver glycogen supplies energy to working muscles (and the brain) in the short to medium term, lasting from about a minute to half an hour. In theory, consuming honey before or during exercise could potentially improve athletic performance compared with other energy sources by providing sustained energy that is accessible to the brain as well as working muscles. Though small studies have yet to demonstrate significant improvements in athletic performance, they do confirm that honey is at least as effective as other energy sources in terms of endurance and athletic performance, if not superior.

Contrast the list of health hazards linked to consuming refined sugars with the well-documented health benefits of consuming honey. Raw honey boasts antioxidant properties with extensive health benefits. A diet incorporating raw honey has been associated with lower triglyceride levels and increased high-density lipoprotein (HDL - commonly known as "good cholesterol"). The anti-inflammatory properties of raw honey may enhance workout recovery, alleviate inflammation of joints and surrounding tissues, and counteract immune suppression, a common post-exercise response that places athletes at a higher risk of infectious diseases.

Despite its high energy density, [honey appears to impact metabolism in a manner that promotes weight loss](#), particularly in physically active individuals. In controlled studies comparing weight changes among individuals consuming measured doses of raw honey, water (placebo), or refined sugar, raw honey consumption has been consistently associated with weight loss in numerous clinical trials involving humans and animals. Remarkably, even when the total calorie intake is higher in the honey group compared to the refined sugar group, those who regularly consume honey experience greater weight loss or less weight gain.

[Raw honey serves as a natural and convenient energy source](#). While authentic raw honey is more expensive than common manufactured sugars, pound-per-dollar or calorie-per-dollar, most raw honeys become cost-effective when compared to intensely and expensively marketed energy bars or drinks. By utilizing raw honey as an exercise energy source and post-exercise blood glucose replenisher, not only can individuals avoid the counterproductive and harmful effects of processed sugars, but they can also benefit from an opposite (positive) impact in many instances.

As North Americans continue their pursuit of healthier lifestyles through exercise, they would be

wise to be mindful of the fuel they choose to support their physical activities. Embracing natural alternatives like raw honey can contribute to a more wholesome and beneficial exercise routine, enhancing overall well-being and fitness outcomes.

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