time to take Action

Above you have learn't some simple strategies that will give you knowledge of what is needed to get you on the path to dropping sugar from you diet, but nothing happens with out taking action. By now you should have detoxed your pantry, fridge and other areas of your house from foods that are not serving you in your journey to dropping sugar. If you haven't done this, I recommend you do this before going any further.

Next step is to fill your fridge and pantry with foods that you will be eating over the your sugar dropping journey and beyond.
Food shopping on a no sugar diet may be overwhelming if you don't have the proper sugar free 'guidance' on what foods and drinks to buy, where to buy them, or and what products to avoid, so I am going to help you with this with the only sugar free shopping list you will ever need.

Fresh Produce
This is the first item on the drop sugar shopping list because fresh produce should form the base of your diet (you should get 80-85 % of your calories from whole fresh and unprocessed foods).Here fresh produce stands for simply all kinds of fresh fruits and vegetables. Some great vegetables to eat on a drop sugar diet include leafy greens, avocado, olives, kale, tomatoes, eggplant, cauliflower, broccoli, asparagus, carrots, onions, beans, lentils, chickpeas, or mushrooms. Beets, squash & sweet potatoes can be added once you are confident in maintaining your sugar free lifestyle. Some examples of recommended fruits include all types of berries, apples, pears, banana, plum, orange, grapefruit, lemon, watermelon, cherries, grapes or pomegranate.

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Fresh fruits and vegetables contain only naturally occurring sugars and are high in fibre, which makes them OK for diabetics and people wanting to lose weight. Fresh produce is also high in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants which have proven health benefits.

WHERE TO BUY? It's best to buy fresh produce from a local farmer or Farmers Market (especially seasonal fruits and vegetables). If you're shopping in a supermarket, look for the "organic" label (if possible).

Frozen Produce

Fruits & vegetables should be the base of your diet whether it's summer or winter. Fortunately, there's an option of eating frozen fruits and vegetables which are minimally processed and usually preserve most of their nutrients.When shopping for frozen produce in a supermarket, you can find lots of interesting mixes of different types of fruits and vegetables.For example, you can find ready mixes of several types of berries or stir fry vegetables. These mixes usually provide the necessary variety to your diet without you having to do the "searching" and "mixing".

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Frozen fruits and vegetables are usually packaged. Always read the label to make sure no sugar or unnecessary oils have been added. Ready mixes should contain no ingredients other than the fruits or veggies. Also avoid "lumpy" frozen foods (it means they had been unfrozen and refrozen

WHERE TO BUY? You'll find frozen foods and vegetables in most supermarkets.

Fermented Foods

Fermented foods are so high on this list for a reason! They will help you have more beneficial bacteria (probiotics) in your gut.And having the right bacteria in your gut is linked to many health benefits, such as improved immunity, better digestion and quicker weight loss. Some examples of fermented foods that are excellent sources of probiotics include sauerkraut, kefir, kombucha, tempeh, yogurt, miso, or kimchi. Make sure to eat a serving of fermented foods at least a few times a week.

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Fermented foods are usually prepackaged. Always check the labels for any added extras that may have been added, some manufacturers add flavours, sugars and other ingredients to make their produce taste even better and rely on the consumer not reading the ingredients because the product is deemed "healthy", best to not have any surprises.

WHERE TO BUY? Fermented dairy products are the best to buy at your local grocery store. Fermented vegetables like sauerkraut etc can be usually found in the health food section of your supermarket or a health food store or online for even better pricing.

Protein

Protein is the building block for almost everything in your body including organs, muscles, or skin. Eating the right amount of protein will help you build muscle, burn belly fat, lower blood pressure and even fight diabetes.In an ideal world you should be eating high quality protein with every meal.The best high quality protein sources include eggs, dairy (cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, milk, cheese) fish, lean meats, seafood, nuts (almonds, cashews, peanuts), nut butters, seeds (pumpkin seeds, flax seeds, sunflower seeds, chia seeds), lentils and legumes, oats, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and good quality protein powders.

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Not only are proteins the building blocks of your whole body but they also aid weight loss and increase the level of satiety. Aim for 20-30 grams of high quality protein in each meal.

WHERE TO BUY? You'll easily find most of the recommended protein sources in your local store or supermarket.

Healthy Fats

No matter what diet you follow, you must have at least a few healthy fat sources in your diet. Remember that dropping sugar doesn't means going fat free. You still need to eat healthy fat. Fats are an essential nutrient that provides your body with energy, helps your cells grow, protects your organs, helps you keep yourself warm and even regulates your hormones.The best sources of healthy fat include avocados, whole eggs, fatty fish, nuts, seeds, olive oil, whole coconuts, coconut oil, avocado oil, full-fat dairy (cheese, milk, yogurt), quality dark chocolate, olives, or tofu. Make sure to add healthy fats to all your meals.

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Just like high quality protein, healthy fats will keep your hunger in check. You can add them to most of your meals.

WHERE TO BUY? If you're on a budget, note that you will usually get a better price, variety and quality for items like oils or nuts & seeds online.

Healthy Carbohydrates

Another macro-nutrient which you shouldn't miss on a healthy sugar free diet (unless it's keto diet) is healthy carbohydrate. I'm taking about complex carbs (in the form of whole foods).Carbs fuel your body, brain, muscles, and even the central nervous system. Fibre (a type of carb that's present in whole foods) aids digestion and weight loss. Some sources of good carbs are vegetables (preferably in the whole and fresh form), fruits, legumes (peas, beans, lentils), whole grains (like brown rice, quinoa, oats), nuts & seeds (in addition to good fat, they also have good carbs and decent amount of protein) and tubers (potatoes), once you are confident on dropping sugar.

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Complex (or whole) carbs are usually rich in fibre which keeps you satisfied, regulates blood sugar levels, helps digestion and aids weight loss.

WHERE TO BUY? Both good and bad carbs are easily available in local grocery stores and supermarkets. However, you will usually get better price for whole grains like brown and wild rice, oats or quinoa online. These items are great to buy in bulk or in a co-op.

Natural Sweeteners

Another must-have item when dropping sugar on the shopping list are natural sweeteners.If you like the sweet taste (and I bet you do), there is no need to stop liking it. All you need to do is replace refined sugar with a healthy natural sweetener.If you want to lose weight or have diabetes, I recommend you switch to a zero calorie natural sweetener which doesn't impact blood sugar levels. Some examples of good natural sweeteners that can easily replace sugar include stevia (available in tabs, as liquid or in the powdered form), erythritol, xylitol, or rice malt syrup. If you feel you need to avoid this all together until you have your sugar intake under control then do so but just know that these are great alternatives if you cannot.

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Natural sweeteners let you keep enjoying the sweet taste and eating sugar free desserts and sweets. In addition to the sweet taste, they often provide extra health benefits.

WHERE TO BUY? Natural sweeteners are more expensive than sugar. You will usually get a much better price online.

No sugar added Dairy

Unless you're vegan or lactose intolerant, you'll want to add a few healthy dairy options to your shopping list. Dairy products contain a lot of nutrients, such as calcium, vitamin D, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, vitamins A, B12, and more. Some dairy products also contain probiotics that are good for the gut bacteria. When shopping for dairy, make sure that no sugar is added (just read the label).Some good dairy sources include milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, Greek yogurt or high quality whey protein powders.

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! If you like dairy and you aren't vegan, feel free to add it to your diet. Avoid flavoured dairy products (like fruit yogurts) because they are usually loaded with sugar.

WHERE TO BUY? You will find loads of different dairy product in any grocery store. Just read the label!

Sugar free condiments and Spices

Condiments and spices are an excellent addition to any type of meal. They improve the taste of a meal, make it stronger and most spices even provide some health benefits. That's why it's a fantastic idea to add them to your diet. Some examples of sugar free condiments and spices include mayonnaise, mustard, ranch dressings, BBQ sauces, pepper, chilli powder, cinnamon, ginger, garlic powder, oregano, or vanilla extract to name just a few. However, these condiments will qualify for our no sugar shopping list only if they have no added sugar. It's your task to read the label and make sure that sugar isn't listed within the first 5 ingredients. Other alternatives is to research recipes and make your own condiments.

***QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Sugar free condiments and spices will improve the taste of your meals. Feel free to add them to your diet but ALWAYS check the label. Condiments often contain lots of added sugar**.*

WHERE TO BUY? To get the best bang for your buck, I recommend buying most condiments and spices online.

No Sugar Drinks

Obviously, our drop sugar grocery list wouldn't be complete without a few high quality no sugar added drinks. Drinking sugar (and all of its empty calories) is probably the biggest sin you can commit regarding dieting and your health. That's why you should only drink no added sugar drinks and ditch all the sugary beverages right away.Some examples of healthy no sugar drinks include water (both still and sparkling), black coffee, tea (all types), lemon water, fresh vegetable and fruit juice (keep in mind that fruit juice requires a lot of fruit and much more than you would eat in a normal serve, if suffering from insulin resistance and trying to lose weight i recommend minimising fresh juices until you are reaching your goals.

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! By ditching sugar drinks only, you will usually create a calorie deficit and start losing weight.

WHERE TO BUY? It's best to create your own sugar free beverages.

BONUS - Alcohol

And here's a bonus I know you will love. Just like you don't need to give up the sweet taste on a no sugar diet, you don't need to give up alcohol entirely (if your goal is also weight loss consider dropping the alcohol as this will benefit you and your results) Yes, it's true that most alcoholic drinks have tons of added sugar and empty calories while providing practically no nutrients. That's a fact.However, there are at least a few types of alcoholic drinks that you can consume (in moderation) without ruining your sugar free lifestyle. Some of the alcoholic drinks you can drink on a no sugar diet include dry wine (both white and red), hard liquors (on ice or with soda water, definitely no mixers), and even beer (just make sure it has no added sugar, lower in carbs if on a keto diet or other chemicals in the list of ingredients).

QUICK FACTS & TIPS! Most alcoholic beverages have lots of added sugar and promote weight gain. The worst ones include tequila sunrise, pina colada and daiquiri. If you don't like dry wine, feel free to sweeten it with stevia, erythritol or xylitol.

WHERE TO BUY? Alcohol is everywhere but you might also try to make your own wine or beer.

TIPS ON SUGAR FREE SHOPPING

You now probably know all the essential and necessary groups of foods to shop for your drop sugar diet. Now it's time to share a few practical tips & tricks with you. Here are my top 5 best pieces of advice on sugar free shopping:

- *Do your best to eat as many whole foods as possible. This will minimise the amount of time spent reading labels.*
- *Aim for 80-90% of your diet to be made of whole foods.When buying any packaged food, always read the label. If sugar is listed within the first 4-5 ingredients, you don't want to buy this product.*
- *Buy food labelled as "organic" or from a local source. In the case of fresh produce (fruits and vegetables), it is best to buy it from a local farmer or from the organic shelf in the supermarket.*
- *Shop online. Many healthy and top no sugar diet foods (like nut butter, natural sweeteners, nuts, seeds etc.) are available online where their prices are way lower.*
- *If you like sweet coffee or tea, you can sweeten it with a natural sweetener..*