

# Investigate Science with Sweet Talk

Let's face it, kids and their parents have been battling over sugar for decades. Even older kids can't get enough of the sweet stuff, much to their parents' dismay. Why not call a truce over sugar, at least for a day, and have some fun with it?

Here's an investigative activity in which your child will discover real-world names and uses for sugar, and find out how it is hidden in many different foods. Your middle-schooler will be shocked by your interest in sugar, as well as your ability to "sweet-talk" her into learning science vocabulary.

## What You Need:

- Pantry and refrigerator items
- Paper/pencil
- Clipboard (optional)

## What You Do:

1. Ask your child to take a look in the pantry and refrigerator and make a list of food items she thinks contain sugar.
2. Once her list is complete, provide a list of "sugar words". Point out the ending "-ose" in many of the words:
  - glucose
  - sucrose
  - fructose
  - lactose
  - maltose
  - dextrose
  - corn syrup
  - high fructose corn syrup
  - honey
  - sorbitol
  - glycogen
  - brown sugar
  - molasses
  - monosaccharides
  - polysaccharides
  - caramel
  - fruit juice concentrate
  - barley malt syrup
3. Ask your middle-schooler to begin "investigating" the pantry and refrigerator items to check if her predictions are correct. Direct her to read the labels very carefully, recording the food item and types of sugar it contains.
4. When finished, your child should compare the results with her original predictions. Pose questions, such as:
  - "How many items actually contain sugar?"
  - "What 'sugary' items were most shocking?" (e.g. peanut butter, crackers, vegetable soup, tomato sauce)



Tips:

1. A single pantry item may contain several types of sugar. Challenge your child to find the items with the most and least amounts of sugar.
2. Pose higher-level thinking questions:
  - “How and why do companies ‘hide’ sugar?”
  - “Why is label-reading important for everyone, especially diabetics?”
  - “If you had to create a balanced, sugar-free meal using items in our pantry and refrigerator, what would you serve?”

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