What are some healthier, natural alternatives to refined sugar?

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Excess consumption of processed sugar is linked to multiple health problems. For those looking to switch to healthier and natural substitutes, here are some options:

Date sugar is derived from dehydrated dates, which are grounded and converted into granules. It is rich in antioxidants such as selenium, magnesium and fibre. You can also make a date paste and use it in cakes, granolas, laddoos, fudge, brownies, etc.

Coconut sugar contains inulin (a type of fibre), which makes it good for gut health. It is rich in micro minerals like magnesium, potassium and sodium, and has lower levels of sucrose. Patients with renal diseases should have it in moderation as it is rich in potassium.

Monk fruit sugar is 200 times sweeter than normal sugar. It has zero calories, so it is a good option for weight-watchers and diabetics. Maple syrup is relatively unprocessed. It has antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties. It is used in desserts, pancakes, oatmeal, cereal, etc.

Raw honey is known for its medicinal properties. It has a high level of fructose in it, so a lesser quantity is needed. It is rich in iron riboflavin (vitamin B2). Honey can be stirred in tea or spread over toast, baked oats, cereal, etc.