

Fact Sheet

Central Adelaide Local Health Network

Diabetes Education Service

Sweeteners

A small amount of sugar (sucrose) is acceptable for people with diabetes as part of a healthy diet. There are many sweeteners available for those wanting to add sweetness and use less sugar. There are two groups of alternative sweeteners: non-nutritive sweeteners (also known as 'artificial' or 'intense' sweeteners) and nutritive sweeteners. These may also appear in commercial food products (e.g.: diet drinks, diet desserts) and may be listed in the ingredients as code numbers.

Non-nutritive sweeteners

Non-nutritive sweeteners are essentially kilojoule-free and therefore have no effect on blood sugar levels.

Brand Name	Sweetener	Code Number	Form	Products
NutraSweet Hermesetas Gold Equal (also contains Acesulphame K) Sugarless (also contains Acesulphame K)	Aspartame	951	Tablet Powder Sachet Liquid	
Sugarine Sugarella Sweetex Sucaryl Sweet 'n Low Hermesetas Original	Saccharin	954	Tablet Liquid Sachet	
Splenda Equal Baking	Sucralose	955	Powder	
Sucaryl	cyclamate	952	Tablet Liquid	



Non-nutritive sweeteners (continued)

Brand Name	Sweetener	Code Number	Form	Products
Sunnett Hermesetas Gold	Acesulphame K	950		
Stevia Equal Stevia Hermesetas Naturals (Equal) Sugarless Nirvana PureVia	Steviol glycoside (extracted from the Stevia rebaudiana plant)	960	Tablet Powder Liquid	
Aclame	Alitame	956	Not available	Available in commercial products
Not available	Neotame	961	Not available	Limited availability

Nutritive sweeteners

Nutritive sweeteners are not kilojoule-free and may have different effects on blood sugar levels than non-nutritive sweeteners. Products containing nutritive sweeteners may be labelled as “carbohydrate modified”.

Brand Name	Sweetener (Code number)	Comments	Products
Sweetaddin Fruisana	Fructose	Same kilojoules as sucrose but sweeter with a lower GI	 Also found naturally in fruit
None available	Sugar alcohols -sorbitol (420) -mannitol (421) -xylitol (967) -malitol (965) -erythriol (968)	Same kilojoules as sucrose, except mannitol and erythriol. May have laxative effect and can cause wind and diarrhoea.	Sugar-free lollies, chewing gum, mints, diet foods and drinks.
Natvia Truvia Green Spoon	Combination of erythriol and stevia (960)	Less kilojoules and double the sweetness of sucrose.	

Nutritive sweeteners (continued)

Brand Name	Sweetener (Code number)	Comments	Products
Norbu	Combination of erythriol and a small amount of monk fruit	Sweeter than sucrose. Use in equal quantities as sugar.	
LoGiCane	LoGiCane	Same kilojoules as sucrose but a lower GI	
CSR Smart Sugar	Combination of sucrose and small amount of stevia (960)	Half the kilojoules of sucrose but double the sweetness.	
None available	Isomalt (953) may be listed as humectant)	Fewer kilojoules and half the sweetness of sucrose. May have a laxative effect	Sugar-free lollies, biscuits, crackers
Litesse	Polydextrose	Minimal kilojoules and very small effect on blood sugar levels. May have laxative effect.	Beverages, cakes, lollies, breakfast cereals, desserts, frozen desserts, puddings, salad dressings
None available	Maltodextrin (also known as hydrolysed corn syrup or glucose syrup)	Same kilojoules as sucrose and very high GI	Soy milk, instant pudding, flavoured gelatins, lollies, sauces and salad dressing
None available	Thaimatin (957)	A protein so has no effect on blood sugar levels. Much sweeter than sucrose.	Savoury products, dairy and non-dairy desserts and drinks, lollies, chewing gum and beverages

Are artificial sweeteners safe?

Yes. While there is a lot of debate about the safety of artificial sweeteners, the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has approved the artificial sweeteners available in Australia as safe for human consumption. Remember, not all products containing artificial sweeteners are suitable to include in a healthy eating plan. Always read the nutrition label to check the other ingredients and nutritional values. For example, a product containing an alternative sweetener which is high in fat (particularly saturated fat) should not be eaten in large amounts (e.g.: 'sugar-free' chocolate). Refer to FSANZ website for more information – www.foodstandards.gov.au

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has approved all artificial sweeteners during pregnancy. Use them in small amounts.

Cooking with artificial sweeteners

As heat can change the taste of most non-nutritive sweeteners, they are best added after you have finished cooking. Splenda and Equal are the only ones that can be added during cooking or baking without affecting the taste. Check packaging for portion recommendations if replacing sugar (e.g. not always cup for cup). Many traditional sweet foods like cakes, chocolate, biscuits and desserts are also high in fat. Substituting an sweetener in place of sugar in a recipe does not necessarily mean the food is healthy. It is important to reduce the amount of fat also, especially the saturated fat content.

Sugar in disguise

Sugar may be found in foods disguised under other names. Watch out for these on food labels:

raw sugar	dextrose	golden syrup	sucrose	treacle
castor sugar	honey	malt	fructose	icing sugar
maple syrup	glucose	corn syrup	lactose	agave nectar
invert sugar	brown sugar	molasses	fruit juice concentrate	
rice malt syrup				

Acknowledgements: CALHN, SALHN, NALHN Dietitians.

The information contained within this publication does not constitute medical advice, and is for general information only. Readers should always seek independent, professional advice where appropriate.

For more information

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