



Sweeteners at a Glance

If you find yourself confused by the many different types of sweeteners included in processed foods, you're not alone. Many processed foods contain multiple forms of sweeteners, which makes it difficult to determine just how much sugar the food contains.

When possible, opt for foods that are naturally sugar-free, or foods that contain only natural sweeteners. The chart below lists the different names and types of artificial sweeteners, sugar alcohols, caloric sweeteners, and natural sweeteners. Use this list to help you make smart decisions about how much added sugar you consume on a daily basis.

Artificial Sweeteners	Sugar Alcohols	Caloric Sweeteners and Sugars	Natural Sweeteners
Acesulfame-K (Sunett®, Sweet One®, Swiss Sweet®) Advantame Aspartame (Equal®, Nutra Taste®, NutraSweet®) Neotame (Newtame®) Saccharin (Sweet'N Low®, Sugar Twin®, Necta Sweet®) Stevia* (PureVia®, Rebiana®, Splenda Naturals®, Truvia®) Sucralose (Splenda®) Tagatose (Nutralatose®)	Erythritol Hydrogenated starch hydrolysate Isomalt Lactitol Maltitol Mannitol Sorbitol Xylitol	Barbados sugar Barley malt Beet sugar Brown sugar Buttered syrup Cane sugar (syrup, crystals, juice, etc.) Caramel Confectioner's sugar Corn syrup (high fructose, solids, etc.) Crystalline fructose Demerara sugar Dextran Dextrose Diastatic malt Diatase Florida crystals Fructose Galactose Glucose Golden sugar (syrup, etc.) Icing sugar Invert sugar Malt syrup Maltodextrin Maltose Muscovado Raw sugar Rice syrup Sucrose Treacle Turbinado sugar Yellow sugar	Agave nectar Date sugar Fruit juice concentrate Honey Maple syrup Molasses Sorghum syrup Stevia*

*See the section titled "A Note about Stevia" on the next page.

Food manufacturers began developing artificial sweeteners and marketing them as healthy alternatives to refined sugar as early as 1880. These types of sweeteners became increasingly popular in the 1960s, and are still widely used today. The FDA endorses the safety of artificial sweeteners, but there is a lack of high quality, evidence-based research on humans to encourage their use.

Are Artificial Sweeteners Safe?

One of the main concerns about artificial sweeteners is their potential to cause harm in the body. Some have been linked to attention-deficit disorders, birth defects, diabetes, digestive upset, headaches, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), seizures, and some forms of cancer. For this reason, consumption of artificial sweeteners is not recommended for children or pregnant women.

Another concern about artificial sweeteners is how they affect the body and brain's ability to gauge how much has been eaten. Providing sweetness without calories confuses the body's normal digestive processes. This can lead to intense food cravings, overeating, storage of extra calories as fat, and metabolic diseases and disorders.

For best health, it is recommended that only minimal amounts of sugars, natural sweeteners, and artificial sweeteners be consumed regularly. A balanced diet rich in whole foods and minimal inclusion of processed foods and additives is preferred.

A Note about Stevia

Stevia is marketed as a natural, no-calorie alternative sweetener. It is made from the plant *Stevia rebaudiana*, but packaged stevia and other sweeteners made with stevia aren't always 100% natural. To make it shelf stable, some brands include additives and fillers that can cause adverse reactions to food. To be sure you are choosing the most pure, natural form of stevia, choose brands with only one ingredient: organic stevia leaves.

References

- Artificial Sweeteners. The Nutrition Source. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/artificial-sweeteners/>. Accessed December 4, 2016.
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- Shankar P, Ahuja S, Sriram K. Non-nutritive sweeteners: Review and update. *Nutrition*. 2013;29(11):1293-9. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nut.2013.03.024>.

