

# KEYS TO BETTER HEALTH™

## Skinny on Sugar Substitutes

Americans are becoming increasingly aware of how much sugar they are consuming. In a recent poll, over half of those surveyed said they were actively trying to limit the amount sugar in their diets<sup>1</sup>. Excessive intake of added sugars is associated with poor diet quality, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease<sup>2</sup>. The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that no more than 10 percent of daily calories should come from added sugar<sup>3</sup>. For the average person, that translates to less than 12 teaspoons of sugar per day.

Many people find that using sugar substitutes helps them consume less sugar while still allowing them to enjoy the foods and beverages they love. The following are a few types of popular sugar substitutes as well as tips for how they can be utilized.



### 1. Artificial Sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners are synthetically produced sugar substitutes. They are much sweeter than sugar itself and contain few or no calories. Examples of artificial sweeteners include Saccharin (Sweet'N Low®), Aspartame (Equal®), and Sucralose (Splenda®). Artificial sweeteners are used in soft drinks, candy, baked goods, powdered drink mixes, jams and jellies, and more. Because they contribute no sugar or calories to the diet, they can be useful both for weight control and individuals with diabetes<sup>4</sup>.

### 2. Sugar Alcohols

Sugar alcohols (also called polyols) are carbohydrates derived from fruit and vegetable sources that have been chemically altered. They are not calorie-free, but they contain fewer calories than sugar, and therefore may aid in weight control<sup>4</sup>. Sorbitol, Maltitol, Xylitol, and Erythritol are all types of sugar alcohols. These sweeteners are often used in candy, frozen desserts, baked goods, and fruit spreads. Sugar alcohols utilized in chewing gum and toothpaste can help prevent dental cavities<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. Natural Sweeteners

In recent years, natural sugar substitutes such as stevia, monk fruit, and luohanguo have grown in popularity. These sweeteners are extracted from plants and contain few or no calories. They are commonly used in beverages, baked goods, cereals, granola bars, and as table top sweeteners<sup>2</sup>.

**Keys to Better Health™** offers a nutrition shelf-edge labeling program, which makes it easy for you to quickly identify healthy choices regardless of what diet you follow. When you're in our store, be on the lookout for our nutrition tags

Resources:

1. Americans Are Getting Serious About Sugar. Fortune 500 website. <http://fortune.com/2016/02/02/america-cutting-sugar/> Updated February 2, 2016. Accessed March 14, 2017.
2. Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Use of Nutritive and Nonnutritive Sweeteners. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. 2012;112:5.
3. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion website. <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/> Accessed March 14, 2017.
4. Artificial Sweeteners and Other Sugar Substitutes. Mayo Clinic website. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/artificial-sweeteners/art-20046936> Updated August 20, 2015. Accessed March 15, 2017.



*Disclaimer: This information is intended for educational purposes only and does not replace advice from your doctor or health care provider. For individual recommendations, please consult with a doctor or registered dietitian.*