



# Artificial Sweeteners

Artificial, low-calorie sweeteners provide alternatives to sugar-containing foods. Low-calorie sweeteners contain almost no calories or carbohydrates. They do not raise blood glucose or insulin levels. People with **diabetes** can choose foods and beverages with low-calorie sweeteners as part of a balanced diet.

If you decide to use sugar substitutes when baking or cooking, there are a few important things to know:

- Baked products may be **lighter in color** because real sugar has a caramelizing/browning effect and artificial sweeteners do not.
- **Volume** may be lower in cakes, muffins, and quick breads because artificial sweeteners do not have the same bulking ability as sugar.
- **Texture** may be altered in some baked products, especially cookies.
- **Taste** may be slightly altered if you are sensitive to the sweetener's aftertaste.
- **Cooking time** of your baked goods may be slightly different when using artificial sweeteners.
- Sugar naturally holds in moisture, so baked products with the sugar removed **will not stay fresh as long**.

Most companies sell their sweeteners in individual packets and also in bulk quantities for baking purposes. Read the package carefully for specific instructions on the best way to substitute the artificial sweetener for sugar in your recipes. Each company's website can also be a helpful resource for baking tips.

Some brands offer pre-made blends of sugar and artificial sweeteners that are meant to be used in baking. They are half-sugar and half-artificial sweetener, so they have half the calories and carbohydrate as sugar alone.

Remember that baking blends still have a significant amount of calories and carbohydrates and therefore need to be considered when meal planning.

## Did You Know?

Sugar alcohols are found in fruits and vegetables as well as in packaged foods. They are commonly used as a sugar alternative in processed foods due to their lower amount of calories, and actually contain no alcohol despite their name! Be cautious when eating foods prepared with them as some people complain of unpleasant digestive system side effects.



## Types of Artificial Sweeteners

**Aspartame** ( Equal®, Nutrasweet® and Spoonful™ ) has a flavor similar to sucrose (sugar) with no aftertaste. It is used as a table-top sweetener and in carbonated beverages, hard and soft candies, baked goods and mixes, nonalcoholic beverages and malt beverages. A packet of this sweetener is equivalent in sweetness to two teaspoons of sugar and has four calories. Aspartame is not recommended for use in recipes that require lengthy heating or baking time, because it is not heat stable and loses its sweetness. It may, however, be added at the end of the cooking cycle in many recipes.

**Acesulfame-K** (Sunette®, Sweet One® and Diabetisweet®) is similar to aspartame in sweetening power, but holds up better to heat and costs less. It is used in products such as chewing gums, dry beverage mixes, and soft drinks. Acesulfame potassium or acesulfame K is calorie-free and about 200 times sweeter than sucrose, or table sugar. Acesulfame K is highly stable and is used in a wide variety of foods, beverages and baked products.

**Saccharin** (Sweet N Low®) is 200 to 700 times sweeter than sucrose. It is sold as a white powder for use as a tabletop sweetener, and used in a variety of foods such as beverages, jams, and baked goods. It has a bitter aftertaste at high concentrations. It can be used in cooking and baking, but it is recommended to substitute for only half of the sugar.

**Stevia** (PureVia™, Truvia™, Sun Crystals®, and Stevia Extract In The Raw™) is a plant native to Central and South America that is 200 to 300 times sweeter than sucrose. Stevia holds up well in baking products and does not have a strong aftertaste.

**Sucralose** (Splenda®) is calorie-free and 600 times sweeter than sucrose. Sucralose can be found as a tabletop sweetener and in a variety of products including desserts, confections, and nonalcoholic beverages. Sucralose is highly stable and can be used in foods, beverages and in cooking and baking, although it is recommended to substitute only up to half the sugar.

*Keep in mind that while artificial sweeteners may contain little to no calories, many of the foods prepared with them still do and should be enjoyed in moderation.*