

sugars & sweeteners



❖ does eating sugar cause diabetes?

No. Eating sugar does not cause diabetes. However, eating foods that are high in sugar, fat and calories can lead to weight gain.

❖ how much sugar can I have?

Less than 10% of your daily calories should come from added sugars. Limiting sugar can help maintain a healthy weight and improve blood sugar control.

❖ what about using honey instead?

Honey, brown sugar and maple syrup are all different types of sugar and will all affect your blood sugar. There is no “best” choice – what you choose is entirely up to you.

❖ stay hydrated the low carb way!

Many popular drinks, such as regular pop, juice, sports drinks and milk shakes are high in sugar. To save calories and carbohydrates, swap them for low sugar or sugar free alternatives such as water, milk, or plain coffee/tea.

❖ what do the claims mean?

sugar-free or **sugarless** – each serving has less than 0.5g of sugar or less than 5 calories

reduced or **lower in sugar** – compared to a similar product with the same portion size, the food has at least 25% and 5g less sugar

unsweetened – the food contains no added sugars or sweeteners.

❖ what are artificial sweeteners?

Artificial sweeteners are also known as sugar substitutes. They have very little to no calories and do not raise blood sugar. Artificial sweeteners can be up to 13,000 times sweeter than regular sugar. Only a **small amount** is needed to reach your desired level of sweetness.

❖ acceptable daily intake (ADI)

Each artificial sweetener has an ADI level set by Health Canada. It is the amount that can be consumed on a daily basis throughout the lifetime without any negative health risks.

❖ how do I carb count for artificial sweeteners?

Sugar alcohols are listed on the food label under carbohydrate and should be subtracted from the total carbohydrate number (in grams). Other artificial sweeteners are not listed on the food label and do not need to be counted.

❖ baking with artificial sweeteners

A few things to keep in mind when baking with artificial sweeteners:

- Baked goods may be lighter in colour and have less volume
- The taste may be different
- Cooking time may be different
- Foods may spoil quicker

The best sweetener to use for baking is **Splenda** because it is heat stable. **Aspartame** is not suitable for baking.

it's a personal choice

Artificial sweeteners are an option available to people who are looking to enjoy a sweet taste without any calories or carbohydrates. This does not mean that you have to use them – it all comes down to personal choice and preference. Some people feel uncomfortable with using artificial sweeteners and would prefer to avoid them, and that is okay. If you choose not to use artificial sweeteners, just remember that regular sugar will raise blood sugar levels and should be limited in our diets.

common sweeteners

These sweeteners will raise blood sugar

Sweetener	Common Name	Common use	ADI
Sugar	Brown sugar, white sugar, icing sugar, invert sugar, dextrose, fructose, glucose, lactose, maltose, sucrose, maltodextrin, brown rice syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, high fructose corn syrup, honey, molasses, barley malt, fruit juice concentrate, agave nectar	Sweetens foods and drinks May be found in medications	N/A

common artificial sweeteners

These sweeteners will NOT raise blood sugar

Sweetener	Common Name	Common use	ADI	Comments
Aspartame	Equal, NutraSweet	Added to food and drinks Available as tablets, packets and granulated	40mg/kg/day	Flavour may change when heated One can of diet pop has up to 200mg Safe in pregnancy
Acesulfame Potassium (Ace-K)	N/A	Added to packaged foods and drinks	15mg/kg/day	One can of diet pop has about 42mg Safe in pregnancy
Cyclamate	Sucaryl, Sugar Twin Sweet'N Low	Packets, tablets, liquid and granulated form Not added to packaged foods	11 mg/kg/day	One packet of Sugar Twin contains 264 mg of cyclamate Avoid when pregnant
Neotame	N/A	Added to packaged food and drinks	2mg/kg/day	Safe in pregnancy
Saccharin	Hermesetas	Available as tablets Not added to packaged foods	5mg/kg/day	Available only in pharmacies Avoid when pregnant
Steviol glycosides	Stevia	Table top sweetener Added to natural health products and some foods	4mg/kg/day	Not recommended for children, pregnant women or people with low blood pressure
Sucralose	Splenda	Packets and granulated form Added to packaged food and drinks	9mg/kg/day	Can be used for cooking and baking Safe in pregnancy
Sugar Alcohols	Lactitol, Mannitol, Sorbitol, Xylitol, Maltitol, Polydextrose, Isomalt, Palatinit, Polyol syrups	Found in "sugar free" or "no sugar added" foods May be found in medications	N/A	>10g/day may cause GI upset including gas, bloating and diarrhea Safe in pregnancy Listed on food labels – subtract them from total carbohydrate if you are carb counting
Thaumatococin	N/A	Chewing gum, breath freshener, salt substitutes	0.9 mg/kg/day	Safe in pregnancy May leave licorice-like after taste