

NUTRITION NUGGET # 15

What is the difference between artificial sweeteners and sugars seen at grocery stores?

Answer: Artificial sweeteners have little or no calories compared to sugars. Consume all types of sugars with moderation.



Facts:

- **Sugars are nutritive sweeteners that give energy or calories in form of carbohydrates, but no other nutrients. Sugars are found naturally in fruits and milk, or can be added to foods and beverages (honey, molasses, sucrose). Sugar is listed as a safe food by the FDA. The American Heart Association recommends limiting added sugars to **no more than 6 teaspoons (100 calories) for women and no more than 9 teaspoons (150 calories) for men per day.****
- **Sugar substitutes or non-nutritive sweeteners provide zero or less calories than sugar, and no nutritional value. Artificial sweeteners are sweeter than table sugar so you can use smaller amounts. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the use of: stevia, acesulfame-K, aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal), neotame, saccharin (SweetN'Low), and sucralose (Splenda).**
- **Aspartame should be avoided for people with Phenylketonuria (PKU) a genetic condition.**
- **Sugar-free doesn't mean a food is free of calories. Check labels. Sugars and sugar substitutes don't offer the same health benefits as do fruits and vegetables.**
- **Consuming too much sugar may lead to tooth decay, poor nutrition, weight gain, and increased triglycerides. Limit the amount of sugar and sugar-substitutes eaten in foods and beverages to maintain a healthy lifestyle.**



Apply: What food labels can you share with people to compare between different types of sugars and artificial sweeteners?

References: <http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/food-composition/nutritive-and-nonnutritive-sweetener-resources>; <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002444.htm>; http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Frequently-Asked-Questions-About-Sugar_UCM_306725_Article.jsp; <http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/artificial-sweeteners/MY00073/METHOD=print>; <http://science.howstuffworks.com/innovation/edible-innovations/artificial-sweetener.htm>; <http://www.americansweets.co.uk/sugar-free-smuckers-sweet-orange-marmalade-1275oz-jar-7094-p.asp>; <http://www.energyfiend.com/caffeine-content/diet-coke>. Accessed on: 07/15/13.