

**What are sugar substitutes?**

These are sometimes known as “artificial sweeteners” or “non-nutritive sweeteners”. You might even know these based on the color of the packets – blue, pink or yellow.

There are six sugar substitutes approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in foods and drinks:

- Aspartame: Equal, NutraSweet, Sweet Mate
- Saccharin: Sweet ‘N Low, Sugar Twin, Sweet Magic, Sucaryl
- Sucralose: Splenda, Nevella
- Acesulfame-K: Sweet One, Sunette
- Neotame
- Stevia: PureVia, Truvia, SweetLeaf, Stevia in the Raw, Sun Crystals

These sweeteners are 100 to 600 times sweeter than regular sugar, so you only need to use very small amounts. Neotame is not widely used yet in food or beverages.

**Are sugar substitutes calorie-free?**

All of these sweeteners are either calorie-free or very low calorie when used in everyday amounts. Sugar alcohols, such as sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol contain both calories and carbohydrate, and aren’t the same as sugar substitutes.

**Do sugar substitutes affect blood glucose levels?**

Sugar substitutes contain little to no carbohydrate, so they have no effect on blood glucose levels. However, many sweeteners are used in foods and drinks that contain carbohydrate, which, in turn, can affect your blood glucose levels.

**What does “sugar-free” mean?**

“Sugar-free” means that no white sugar, brown sugar, honey, high-fructose corn syrup or dextrose has been added to the food or drink. “Sugar-free” does not mean “calorie-free” or “carbohydrate-free”, because a food may contain sugar naturally, such as the lactose in milk or fructose in fruit.

Read the Nutrition Facts label on a food or drink to decide how to include a sugar-free food into your meal plan. Some foods, such as sugar-free gelatin or sugar-free gum, may be so low in carbohydrate that you can count it as a “free” food. Other foods, such as sugar-free cookies, may have as much carbohydrate as the regular cookie!

Let's compare labels from two bottles of cranberry juice:

Cranberry Juice Cocktail	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size	8 oz.
Calories	130
Total Fat	0 g
<b>Sat. Fat</b>	0 g
Total Carb	33 g
<b>Dietary Fiber</b>	0 g
<b>Sugars</b>	33 g

"Light" Cranberry Juice Cocktail*	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size	8 oz.
Calories	40
Total Fat	0 g
<b>Sat. Fat</b>	0 g
Total Carb	10g
<b>Dietary Fiber</b>	0 g
<b>Sugars</b>	10 g

\*Contains aspartame

Even though the light-style juice contains aspartame, it still contains carbohydrate from the fruit juice and needs to be counted in your meal plan.

### **Are sugar substitutes safe to use?**

All of the six sugar substitutes are safe to use in amounts that people usually eat them. This safety level is called the Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI). ADI is the amount of a food additive that can be safely eaten every day over a person's lifetime without causing harm. A 100-fold safety factor is included when setting the ADI.

No studies have shown that sweeteners cause brain tumors, cancer or other health problems. If you think that a sweetener has any side effects, switch to another kind and talk with your healthcare provider.

### **Can sugar substitutes be used in cooking and baking?**

These sweeteners can be used in cooking and baking:

- Sucralose
- Saccharin
- Acesulfame-K
- Stevia

Aspartame can be used in many recipes, but works best if it's added at the end of the cooking time. Aspartame can break down at high temperatures and lose its sweetness.

For more information on using sweeteners in cooking and baking, read the package instructions or visit the product's website.