


SUGAR AND SUGAR SUBSTITUTES

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Research shows that **chemical-based artificial sweeteners** may have unfavorable effects on our bodies. They may increase the release of insulin (which makes it difficult to lose weight) and may change our microbiome (our gut bacteria). They may also trigger cravings for more food or sweets. Artificial sweeteners are different from natural sweeteners. See below for which to choose and which to avoid.

SWEETENERS to AVOID:

Splenda	NutraSweet and Equal	Sweet 'n Low	Any with other "fillers"
			
sucralose	aspartame	saccharin	Contains dextrose

NATURAL SWEETENERS TO CHOOSE:






stevia, monk fruit and allulose

Below are examples of the preferred options. These examples do not contain "fillers" (as "Stevia in the Raw" above does). Note that [allulose](#) may contain some carbs (listed in the nutrition facts) but these are not absorbed by the body and do not seem to affect blood sugar. [Inulin](#) is a type of fiber with potential health benefits.

SweetLeaf Stevia	SteviaClear Sweet Drops	Organic Stevia (Powder)	Monk Fruit (Powder)	Monk Fruit (Liquid)	Allulose (Powder)
					
Stevia + Inulin	Stevia Leaf Extract	Pure Stevia	Pure Monk Fruit	Monk Fruit Extract	Allulose

NATURAL SWEETENERS THAT INCLUDE ERYTHRITOL - Use caution (for now).

There has been some research (just one study in [Nature Medicine](#)) that has shown an association between high blood levels of **erythritol** and blood clotting + cardiovascular disease risk. The body naturally makes erythritol, and it's naturally occurring in some foods (both in smaller amounts); the dose consumed may be the problem. Until research is more clear, please use caution with erythritol (and learn more [here](#)). Below are examples.

Truvia	Pyure - Liquid	Pyure - Granulated	Monk Fruit	Swerve
				
Stevia + erythritol	Stevia + erythritol	Stevia + erythritol	Erythritol + monk fruit extract	Erythritol + prebiotic oligosaccharides

FOR ADDITIONAL LEARNING:

Click on the links below.

Note that all of these were written prior to the erythritol study in Nature Medicine. Erythritol has a history of enjoying very favorable reviews, and is likely to be a reasonably safe sugar alternative (if used in moderation), unlike the artificial sweeteners (sucralose, aspartame, saccharin) that do seem to cause harm.

5 Natural Sweeteners That are Good for Your Health (Healthline)	Sucralose (Splenda): Good or Bad? (Healthline)	Low-Carb Sweeteners: Visual Guide to the Best and the Worst (Diet Doctor)
How Artificial Sweeteners Affect Blood Sugar and Insulin (Healthline)	Monk Fruit Versus Stevia: Pros and Cons (Healthline)	
The Best Sweeteners for People with Diabetes (Diabetes Strong)	6 Reasons Why High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) is Bad For You (Healthline)	Artificial Sweeteners are Making you Fat and Causing Cancer (The Thyroid Fixer Podcast)
Is Maltitol a Safe Sugar Substitute? (Healthline)		
Erythritol: Healthy Sweetener or Big Fat Lie? (Healthline)	Should You Stop Erythritol? (YouTube-Dr. Ken Berry)	Erythritol and Cardiovascular Events (NIH)

WHERE ARE ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS HIDING?

- ❖ DIET SODA
- ❖ ENERGY DRINKS
- ❖ SPORTS DRINKS
- ❖ WATER ENHANCERS
- ❖ PROTEIN SHAKES
- ❖ YOGURT
- ❖ JUICE
- ❖ CANNED FRUIT
- ❖ CONDIMENTS
- ❖ CANDY AND OTHER TREATS



For any food or beverage marketed as
“SUGAR-FREE” -

Check the **ingredients list** to see how the product is sweetened or flavored.

Use the guide on page one to help decide whether that product is safe to use.

Rule of Thumb: Look for options that are sweetened with **stevia, monk fruit or allulose**. For visuals of choices that include these sweeteners, see [BEST CHOICES FOR BEVERAGES](#).

WHOLE FOOD SWEETENERS: ARE THEY A BETTER CHOICE?

In our push to eat whole, real foods/ingredients, we might decide that sugar substitutes are to be avoided altogether, and that **sugar from whole foods** (as you see below) would be the better choice. However, we must also consider the **calories** and **carbs** (sugars) in these items. And don't kid yourself - ALL of these are **processed foods** - none of these occur in nature in the volume and concentrations that they are often used. For ease of comparison, all are listed as one tablespoon.

Honey	Coconut Sugar	Date Sugar	Maple Syrup	Molasses	Agave Nectar
Per Tablespoon: 60 calories 17 grams carbs 16 grams sugar	Per Tablespoon: 45 calories 12 grams carbs 12 grams sugar	Per Tablespoon: 30 calories 7 grams carbs 6 grams sugar	Per Tablespoon: 50 calories 13 grams carbs 13 grams sugar	Per Tablespoon: 60 calories 16 grams carbs 14 grams sugar	Per Tablespoon: 60 calories 16 grams carbs 16 grams sugar
INGREDIENTS: FILTERED HONEY	INGREDIENTS: ORGANIC COCONUT SUGAR	INGREDIENTS: DATE SUGAR FROM POWDERED DRY DATES	INGREDIENTS: ORGANIC MAPLE SYRUP	INGREDIENTS: MOLASSES	INGREDIENTS: ORGANIC BLUE AGAVE

To learn more: *Zoe Science and Nutrition Podcast* - [What's the best natural sugar substitute?](#)

OTHER "DIET" OR "SUGAR FREE" PRODUCTS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Note from Julie: I will update this list periodically so that it reflects items commonly asked about. Please ask me about products so I know which ones to look up for you!

KEY: Items in **green** are more favorable; items in **orange** contain unfavorable sweeteners + other ingredients. Use caution with items in **yellow**; too many sugar alcohols can cause gas, bloating and cramping.

FOOD CATEGORY	BRAND	COMMENTS
CANDY	Werther's Original SF Hard Candy	Contains isomalt and acesulfame potassium
	Hershey's Zero Sugar Assortment	Contains maltitol , sucralose in some & polydextrose
GUM	Trident, Extra, Orbit, Ice Cubes	Most regular chewing gum contains a combination of sorbitol , xylitol , mannitol , acesulfame potassium , aspartame and food colorings .
	Pur	Sweetened with xylitol and "natural flavors"
	Epic Xylitol Gum	Sweetened with xylitol and "natural flavors"
ICE CREAM AND FROZEN TREATS	Bryer's "Carb Smart" Ice Cream	Contains maltitol syrup , polydextrose , sucralose and acesulfame potassium
SALAD DRESSING	Skinny Girl	Most contain sucralose
SNACK BARS	Atkins Snack Bars	Contains sunflower oil , sucralose , Carrageenan (potential carcinogen)
SYRUP	Log Cabin Sugar Free Syrup	Contains sorbitol , aspartame , acesulfame potassium , caramel colors