

# Guide to Alternative Sweeteners

When trying to cut back on sugar, you may be tempted to look at alternative sweeteners. This guide will walk you through the different alternative sweeteners, natural and artificial so you can see which are the best options for you.

## Full calorie sugar alternatives



You may have been surprised when you reviewed the list of sugar names to watch for on labels. I've included sweeteners like honey, molasses, and date sugar. While these sweeteners have advantages over white sugar they are still sugar. Your body still treats them as sugar, so if you are trying to eliminate sugar, these have to go, too.

Honey, molasses and date sugar all offer some nutritional value. They also have flavour that is not just sweetness so you will know when they are added to food.

## Stevia



Stevia is a sweetener extracted from the leaves of the stevia plant. The use of stevia as a sweetener is approved in some countries. In the US only a highly purified version is FDA approved. Health Canada has also approved steviol glycosides. Stevia does not raise blood sugar so is recommended for diabetics as a sweetener.

Stevia is becoming increasingly popular in many processed foods.

## **Sugar alcohols**

Sugar alcohols include sweeteners like xylitol and sorbitol. They do not contain any alcohol and are made by processing sugars. They do have calories, but generally fewer than sugar and also generally do not raise blood sugar levels. Sugar alcohols are commonly found in chewing gum.

Some people may find that they do not tolerate sugar alcohols and they may cause digestive issues.

## **Sucralose**

Sucralose has been a popular alternative sweetener for a while now. It has been approved by the FDA and Health Canada. It is marketed under the brand name of Splenda.

Recently there have been concerns with Sucralose. Sucralose may cause an increase in blood sugar levels and may trigger insulin resistance. It has also been found to affect gut bacteria which is something we don't want.

## **Aspartame**

Aspartame has been around for a while and is still a popular alternative sweetener. It has been approved by most major health agencies and appears to be safe for most people, if consumed in reasonable amounts.

Aspartame has come under scrutiny and has been associated with many health risks. Some of these include increased risk of cancer and has actually been associated with obesity. I'm not sure how this will play out, but I don't like the taste of aspartame so I avoid it any way.

So which sweeteners should you choose?

My advice is to limit sweeteners of any kind. That doesn't mean never eating anything sweet. It just means taking a careful look at what you are using for sweeteners.

References:

<https://draxe.com/natural-sweeteners/>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/sugar-alcohols-good-or-bad#section1>

<https://www.downtoearth.org/articles/2009-03/68/sucralose-dangerous-sugar-substitute>