

Living Well with Diabetes

Baking with Sugar Substitutes

Although nutrition guidelines no longer view eating sugar as unsafe for people with diabetes, it must be counted as part of your allotment of carbohydrates. Be aware that many foods that have sugar often have a high fat content. These foods should be used only on special occasions.

Artificial sweeteners (non-caloric), on the other hand, are "free foods" and therefore do not raise blood glucose levels and can be added to a meal plan. Moderate amounts of these sweeteners can be used to make many of the special things that people with diabetes may feel they have missed.

Aspartame

This sweetener is 160 to 220 times sweeter than table sugar and is not appropriate for recipes that are cooked more than 20 minutes, as the chemical compound breaks down. It is therefore suggested that it be added at the very end of cooking recipes, like puddings. People with a rare condition called phenylketonuria (PKU) should avoid aspartame. Otherwise, it is a safe sweetener. The brand names are Equal, Sweetmate, and Spoonfuls.

Acesulfame Potassium

This sweetener, also known as acesulfame-K, came on the market in 1988. It can be used in baking and cooking because it does not break down when heated. Two hundred times sweeter than table sugar, it is often used with sugar in baking to achieve the desired texture. The tabletop sweetener is called Sweet One.

Saccharin

Saccharin, which is 200 to 700 times sweeter than table sugar, can be used to sweeten either hot or cold foods. Pregnant women are cautioned not to use it. You can purchase saccharin under the brand names Sucaryl, Sugar Twin, Sweet Magic, Sweet 'n Low, and Zero-Cal.

Sucralose

This product, which is made from sucrose, was approved in 1998 and is 600 times sweeter than table sugar. It can be used in recipes that require prolonged heating without losing any of its sweetness. It has no reported side effects or restrictions on its use by pregnant women. It can be purchased under the brand name Splenda.