

DO IT & DIET

Weight! Low-Calorie Sweeteners Can Help

(NAPSA)—Want to manage your weight while enjoying something sweet? Low-calorie sweeteners offer a way for you to have your cake and eat it, too. Yet many people do not realize the calorie reduction benefits of these safe, useful ingredients.

According to the International Food Information Council Foundation's 2011 *Food & Health Survey*, only 29 percent of consumers agree that low-calorie sweeteners can reduce the calorie content of foods.

Research shows that replacing calorie-containing sweeteners like sugar with low- or no-calorie sweeteners can lead to calorie reduction and help manage weight. The position statement of the American Dietetic Association states that “non-nutritive sweeteners...have been shown to promote modest loss of weight and, within a multidisciplinary weight control program, may facilitate long-term maintenance of reduction in body weight.” (2004)

Low-calorie sweeteners currently permitted in foods and beverages in the United States have a long history of safe use and are safe for the general population, including pregnant women and children. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reviews all low-calorie sweeteners for safety before permitting them for use in foods and beverages. The six permitted low-calorie sweeteners include aspartame, acesulfame-potassium (or Ace-K), neotame, saccharin, high-purity stevia sweeteners, and sucralose.

The consensus science—that is, the conclusion of most experts—is that low-calorie sweeteners do not increase appetite or cravings. In fact, several well-done studies of both humans and laboratory ani-



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mals have found that low-calorie sweeteners promote weight *loss*, not weight gain. A few recent studies using laboratory rodents that suggested a relationship between low-calorie sweeteners and weight gain included a very small number of animals and are limited in their ability to show a cause-and-effect relationship.

When replacing higher-calorie foods and beverages, low-calorie sweeteners can significantly reduce or completely eliminate calories from those foods. It is important to read the calorie and serving information on the label to understand how many calories are in a serving and to monitor total calorie intake, both helpful tools for successful weight management.

For more information about low-calorie sweeteners and weight management, visit www.foodinsight.org.