



spotlight on health

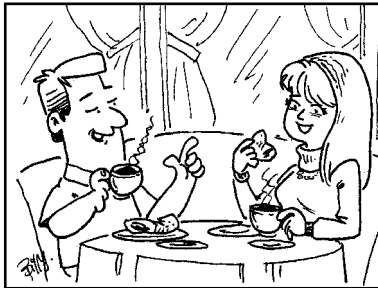
Sugar Alternative Provides Health Benefits

(NAPSA)—In the “battle of the bulge,” calorie counters, low carbohydrate dieters and those with diabetes, hypoglycemia or a sweet tooth now have a potent weapon in a native plant from Paraguay. Cultivated for the nectar-like flavor of its leaf and proven to be 30 times sweeter than sugar, Stevia, as it’s known throughout the world, is consumed liberally for its nutritional, health benefits.

Originally discovered by the Paraguayan Guarani Indians, Stevia is widely utilized as a safe, non-caloric, natural sweetening alternative that was introduced to developed nations in the late nineteenth century.

Used extensively in Japan following a ban in the early 1960’s on artificial sweeteners such as aspartame and saccharine, Stevia products have been used in hundreds of the country’s mass market food products including diet sodas and low-calorie snacks. Commanding more than 50 percent of the country’s sugar substitute market today, Stevia has passed a gauntlet of stringent scientific tests and now retains the lion’s share of the alternative sweetener market.

After the 1994 passage of the



Consumers have a new choice to sweeten their food and drinks.

Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA), Stevia was allowed in the U.S. Because the FDA does not recognize Stevia as a food additive, the herb is sold in health food stores as a dietary supplement, not specifically as a sweetener.

While its popularity as a sugar alternative is significant, Stevia also is a nutrient-rich herb, containing substantial amounts of protein, calcium, phosphorous and other nutrients.

Stevia is considered an exceptional aid in weight loss and weight management because it contains no calories and tends to reduce hunger sensations and cravings for sweets. Other bene-

fits of adding Stevia to the daily diet may include improved digestion and soothed upset stomachs.

Studies suggest Stevia offers a number of therapeutic effects including lowering blood pressure; improving gastrointestinal function and aiding in digestion; stimulation of the body’s immune system and helping ward off colds and flu; and inhibiting the growth and reproduction of bacteria, leading to its use in mouthwash and tooth paste products. Externally applied, Stevia concentrate is said to heal cuts and skin problems without scarring and keeps skin and hair youthful and healthy.

The SweetLeaf™ Company, the nation’s leading producer of Stevia, features a complete line of packets, powder, extract, liquid, concentrate and tablets. For a free Stevia sample and product information call (800) 947-6417, or visit the Web site at www.steviaplus.com.

Whether steeped as an herbal tea, added as a non-caloric sweetener to coffee and other beverages, sprinkled as a flavoring in salads or vegetable dishes, or substituted for sugar in baking, Stevia provides a nutritious alternative to artificial sweeteners.