

Non-sugar sweeteners

Non-sugar sweeteners impart a sweet taste without significantly contributing to the energy level (kilojoules) of the food or drink. They are added to food and drinks to replace all or some of the sugar present to create products with lower kilojoules and/or carbohydrates/sugar¹.

By having a very high sweetening power compared to sugar, non-sugar sweeteners are used in minute amounts to confer the desired level of sweetness, while contributing very little or no energy at all to the final product.

Different terms

There are several terms given to these substances:

- intense sweeteners
- high intensity sweeteners
- non-nutritive sweeteners
- sugar alternatives
- sweeteners

Role of non-sugar sweeteners

Non-sugar sweeteners can play a helpful role in reducing total energy intake and thus in weight management, when used in place of sugars and as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.

Non-sugar sweeteners can therefore support adherence to the Australian Dietary Guidelines, through limiting consumption of added sugars.

They are helpful to people with diabetes who need to manage their carbohydrate intake, as non-sugar sweeteners do not affect blood glucose control.

Consumption and Safety.

The safety of non-sugar sweeteners has been thoroughly evaluated and consistently confirmed by a strong body of scientific evidence and regulatory bodies worldwide.

A recent review in 2018 of consumption of common non-sugar sweeteners concluded that there was no concern with overconsumption of these substances among the general population globally¹.

Labelling

A food or drink that contains a non-sugar sweetener must be stated in the ingredients list on the label of the product.

Manufacturers can state the common or usual name of the non-sugar sweetener e.g. "sweetener (aspartame)" or the International Numbering System [INS] for Food Additives number, referred to as an "E number" e.g. "Sweetener (951)"².

Fast facts

Role in reformulation

Reformulating a product to replace sugar with non-sugar sweeteners can be challenging.

Although non-sugar sweeteners impart a sweet taste, they are not the same as sugar.

Often other functional ingredients are required to address the change in bulk and texture when sugar is removed from the product and replaced with a non-sugar sweetener³.

Commonly used non-sugar sweeteners²

- Acesulphame potassium (950)
- Advantame (956)
- Aspartame (951)
- Cyclamate (952)
- Monk fruit extract (no E number)
- Neotame (961)
- Saccharin (954)
- Steviol glycosides (960)
- Sucralose (955)

More information

[FSANZ intense sweeteners](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

Human appetite for sweetness is innate, and spans across all ages and cultures, which makes sweetness an integral part of the human diet. However, in times when health organisations worldwide recommend that free sugars intake should be reduced to less than 10% of total daily energy intake for people of all ages, managing sweetness is critical from a nutritional and a public health perspective.