Acesulphame Potassium

What is acesulphame potassium?

Acesulphame potassium (Ace-K) is a non-sugar sweetener that contains the mineral potassium. It was discovered in 1967 accidentally by German chemist, Karl Clauss after he accidentally dipped his fingers into the chemicals and licked them to pick up a piece of paper. It is 130-200 times sweeter than sucrose.[1]

How is Ace-K made?

Ace-K is often blended with other sweeteners (usually sucralose or aspartame). These blends are thought to give a more sucrose-like taste.[1,2]

Where is Ace-K used?

Ace-K is approved for use in a wide variety of foods and drinks,[1] including but not limited to:

- ↗ Fruit and vegetable juice products
- ↗ Water-based flavoured drinks
- ↗ Electrolyte drinks
- ↗ Brewed soft drinks
- ↗ Formulated beverages
- ↗ Flavoured milk
- ↗ Yoghurt and dairy based desserts; custard; ice cream
- ↗ Fruits and vegetables preserved in vinegar, oil, brine, or alcohol
- ↗ Canned fruits and vegetables
- ↗ Confectionery, chewing gum
- ↗ Tabletop sweeteners

FAST FACTS:

Ace-K is safe for:

↗ **People with diabetes and impaired glucose tolerance**

↗ **Pregnant women**

Ace-K can be used by pregnant women and nursing mothers. It is important for all pregnant women to consult with their doctors regarding nutritional needs during pregnancy. [2]

↗ **Children**

Although foods made with non-sugar sweeteners are not usually recommended as part of a child's diet, the Ace-K in foods and drinks is not hazardous to a young person's health. [2]

With obesity rates rising amongst Australian children and adolescents, Ace-K sweetened beverages may help this group reduce their energy/kilojoule intake. [2]

Sweetness relative to sugar

Ace-K has a sweetness of between 130 & 200 times that of sucrose.[2]

By having a very high sweetening power compared to sugar, non-sugar sweeteners are used in minute amounts.

For more information visit the FSANZ website.

Australian Beverages

How is Ace-K handled by the body?

Ace-K is not metabolised by the body and is excreted by the kidneys unchanged.[1]

How do I know Ace-K has been added to my food or drink?

Ingredients in packaged foods must be listed from greatest to smallest by ingoing weight including added water.

In Australia and New Zealand, Ace-K must be labelled as either “Sweetener (950)” or “Sweetener (Acesulphame K)”.

Is Ace-K Safe for everyone?

No population group has been excluded from using Ace-K.

It is appropriate for any person wishing to reduce sugar or energy intake.

There are no warning labels or information statements required for products sweetened with Ace-K.

Safety profile of Ace-K

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) reviewed all the studies and has classified Ace-K as a permitted food additive listed in Schedule 8.

Permissions for different food categories are provided within the table in Schedule 15.[1]

In 2015, FSANZ conducted an assessment to increase the maximum permitted level of Ace-K in chewing gum. FSANZ concluded that there was no public health and safety concern linked with the proposed increase in the permitted level of Ace-K in chewing gum.[3]

Ace-K is also approved in more than 100 countries, including Japan, Switzerland, Norway, Canada and Australia.[1]

Resources

This brochure is designed as a general guide only. For specific health information seek assistance from a suitably qualified health practitioner.

1 Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Schedule 15 Substances that may be used as food additives. Food Standards Code. https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Documents/Sched%2015%20Food%20additives%20v157.pdf

2 ISA 2018. Low calorie sweeteners: role and benefits A guide to the science follow calorie sweeteners. Accessed 11.06.2019
https://www.sweeteners.org/assets/uploads/articles/files/ISA_booklet_September_2018.pdf

3 Food Standards Australia and New Zealand. Maximum Permitted Level of Acesulphame Potassium in Chewing Gum.
http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/applications/Pages/A1100MaxPermit-Ace-KinChewing-Gum.aspx

Australian Beverages