

Monk Fruit Extract

What is monk fruit extract?

Monk fruit extract is derived from the fruit of *Siraitia grosvenorii*, a perennial vine native to southern China. The sweet components of monk fruit extract are cucurbitane triterpene glycosides known collectively as mogrosides.

How is monk fruit extract made?

Monk fruit extract became recognised for its potential use as a non-sugar sweetener in the mid-1970s, where water and ethanol extraction of the principle component of the monk fruit resulted in an intensely sweet substance.

Commercial monk fruit extract is a powder, light yellow-brown in colour, and readily soluble in water.

Where is monk fruit extract used?

Monk fruit extract has a relative lack of bitter taste compared with certain other non-sugar sweeteners, for example, saccharin and acesulfame K. It can be used as a sugar substitute in baking (as it has high temperature stability and no unpleasant aftertaste).^{1,2}

It is used in a range of beverages and foods including fruit and vegetable spreads, confectionery and biscuits, as well as a tabletop sweetener.

FAST FACTS:

Monk Fruit Extract is Safe For:

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

↗ **Pregnant women**

Monk fruit extract 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.

↗ **Children**

Although foods made with non-sugar sweeteners are not usually recommended as part of a child's diet, the Monk Fruit extract used in foods and drinks is not hazardous to a young person's health.

With obesity rates rising amongst Australian children and adolescents, monk fruit extract sweetened beverages may help this group reduce their energy/kilojoule intake.²

Sweetness relative to sugar

Ace-K has a sweetness of between 250 & 400 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](https://www.foodsafety.gov.au/fsanz).

How do I know monk fruit extract is being used?

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

Monk fruit extract must be labelled as follows:

“Sweetener (monk fruit extract or lo han guo extract)”

How is monk fruit extract handled in the body?

Monk fruit extract is largely broken down in the intestine but is only partially absorbed by the body. Pure mogroside V is the primary component, exhibiting a sweetness of between 250 and 400 times that of sucrose.²

Safety profile of monk fruit extract

Monk fruit extract is an approved food additive in China, Japan, Canada and US.

FSANZ has assessed the safety of monk fruit extract. This includes information on history of safe use, genotoxicity, acute and sub-chronic toxicity in laboratory animals, and information on human tolerance and traditional use. It is considered safe for use and has classified monk fruit extract as a Schedule 16 additive with permission for usage at GMP levels.²

Is monk fruit extract safe for everybody?

No population group has been excluded from using monk fruit extract. 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 monk fruit extract.

Resources

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

1 FSANZ Intense sweeteners

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/additives/Pages/Sweeteners.aspx>

2 FSANZ A1129 Accessed 3/9/2019

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/applications/Documents/A1129%20SD1.pdf>