Keeping Diabetes in Check: Incorporating Low- and No-Calorie Sweeteners

While low- and no-calorie sweeteners (LNCS) offer benefits to many, they are especially important for those living with diabetes. “Low-calorie sweeteners can serve an important role in diabetes management,” says Dr. Keri Peterson, Calorie Control Council medical advisor. Because LNCS do not raise blood glucose or insulin levels, they empower people with diabetes to reduce their sugar consumption without sacrificing sweet taste.

Low- and no-calorie sweeteners can make glucose management plans more enjoyable. Though a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes necessitates lifestyle changes, it does not require an elimination of sweet treats from the diet entirely. “Substituting sugars with low calorie sweeteners gives those living with diabetes more flexibility in their diets, allowing them to enjoy sweet foods without affecting blood sugar,” says Dr. Peterson. Taste perception, including sweet taste, is frequently cited as an important factor in food choice, and is touted as the gatekeeper of food intake. Therefore, eliminating the sweet taste from the diet is unrealistic and, with LNCS, unnecessary. By replacing sugar with LNCS, people living with diabetes can maintain control of their blood sugar and insulin levels while still enjoying their favorites.

Keri Peterson, M.D.

Today, there are more options than ever before for foods and beverages sweetened with LNCS, available online and in stores. LNCS can be found in chewing gum, candies, ice cream, baked goods, fruit spreads and canned fruits, fillings and frostings, beverages, yogurt and more. Products labeled as “light,” “reduced-calorie,” “reduced-sugar” or “diet” often include LNCS. These sweeteners, listed on product ingredient labels, include:

- **High intensity sweeteners** such as acesulfame potassium, aspartame, saccharin, sucralose and stevia
- **Polyols (also known as sugar alcohols)** such as erythritol, sorbitol and xylitol
- **Carbohydrate sweeteners** such as allulose and fructose

Additionally, certain LNCS options can be purchased on their own to be included everyday recipes. In fact, they have become so popular that they even have their own area on grocery store shelves, conveniently located next to the sugar that they’re used to replace. These products, often referred to as “tabletop sweeteners,” vary in how and in what amount they are used to substitute sugar in recipes, but directions are typically included on product packaging for ease of use.

When part of a balanced overall diet, LNCS add variety and taste for those looking to manage their blood glucose.

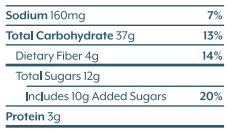
HOW LOW- AND NO-CALORIE SWEETENERS CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

Blood Glucose Levels

Low- and no-calorie sweeteners help to lower the total sugar content of foods and beverages which can help keep blood glucose levels in check.

Living a Sweet Life

Substituting low- and no-calorie sweeteners for caloric ones can make a blood glucose management plan more enjoyable.



Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	

Nutrition

In spite of their sweetness, low- and no-calorie sweeteners are not reflected in the Total or Added Sugars lines on Nutrition Facts labels since they contribute little or no calories. However, polyols and allulose are still reflected in the Total Carbohydrates line, as they have a very small caloric value and a minimal impact on blood glucose levels.

Calorie Control Council
HEALTHY EATING & EXERCISE FOR LIFE®

CalorieControl.org

For more information, visit caloriecontrol.org and look for “Managing Diabetes” in the menu.