



## HOW SWEET IT IS?



By: Jacqui Bushee

I have recently learned that a famous sugar substitute that I have been using for baking and in my beverages may need to be reviewed and find out exactly what it is made of and its potential harm over the long term. In my research I found some interesting information that I think you should know. I also have found out about some alternative sugars and what they are all about. I am also giving you some sites to check out and see what is best for you. That is ultimately what it is all about. What is best for you in your situation? If you use a sugar substitute on a regular basis, then maybe you will find that you need to stop or cut back. If you use a product only occasionally to sweeten your drinks and you are feeling no ill effects, then you may want to continue in that way. You decide what is best, but in the meantime, here is

### Chef's Tips

*Do not give honey to an infant under 1 year of age because of the risk of botulism spores.*

*When making a red sauce which contains a lot of acid, put in a carrot or two, cut up in chunks to naturally sweeten and lower the acidic taste.*

*Potatoes should be stored in a dark area and not in the refrigerator. Refrigeration may turn a percentage of the starch to sugar.*

*Tomatoes and cucumbers and true fruits because they develop from the reproductive structures of plants.*

some interesting information about that "no calorie sweetener, made from sugar so it tastes like sugar."

The generic name for the above sweetener is Sucralose. It is made from sugar by substituting three chlorine molecules for three hydrogen-oxygen groups of the sugar molecule. This change prevents sucralose from being metabolized by the human body. Since we can't digest this sweetener, there are no calories derived from it. A little bit goes a long way since it is 600 times sweeter than sugar. That is probably why when you stop using it in your tea or coffee, and use sugar, you don't think it is sweet enough. Since a teaspoon of sugar is 15 calories, if you use 2 teaspoons in your coffee, that may not be significant enough to contribute to a weight problem. Then again you may have other restrictions besides weight.

Some studies have proven that some of the chlorine remains in the system and is absorbed, not as otherwise thought. Some people have reported symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, to an enlarged liver and kidneys, diarrhea, decreased red blood cell counts and other ailments. Therein lies the problem. How much is absorbed depends on how much is consumed and visa-a-versa. Some people who are "sugar phobic" use quite a bit of this substitute without even realizing it. It is worth a trip down the grocery aisle to check a few labels of products we use, regularly. Look for the name Splenda® on the ingredient panel. It really doesn't tell how much it contains so there again we don't know how much we are consuming. At the moment the low-carb diets are very popular and they all claim that refined sugar is "bad" for you. Other refined foods are "bad" for you too.

There are other non-nutritive and artificial sweeteners on the market: Saccharin (Sweet'N Low®); aspartame (NutraSweet®) and Equal®. These artificial sweeteners are made from chemicals or reactions to chemicals. Most of the artificial sweeteners are actually sweeter than real sugar. We have all

heard stories about these and each of them carries restrictions for those who use them. For instance sorbitol and mannitol, two low caloric manufactured sweeteners may have strong laxative effects.

We initially turned to the artificial sweeteners because we were told that refined sugars were bad for us and they metabolized carbohydrates into fat. There has to be a place where we can go to satisfy the sweetness we need, yet not let it add chemicals to our bodies to do "who knows what" and still be able to eat and enjoy our food.

Refined sweeteners are white sugar, brown sugar, confectioner's sugar, corn syrup, and raw sugar. You may think that raw sugar has to be a "good" sugar just because of its name, but it is still refined and is produced in the initial stages of making white sugar. True "raw sugar" is banned in the U.S. because of the impurities it contains.

Then there are the natural sweeteners. There are quite a few choices and it is worth checking out if that is the way you want to go. There are plant-based sweeteners such as Stevia also known as the "honey leaf" which is 200 times sweeter than sugar. I recently visited an organic farm where the plant is grown and was given a leaf to taste. It became so sweet after a few seconds of chewing, I had to spit it out. I was told the leaves are boiled down and reduced to syrup and used as a sweetener. The best part of this natural sweetener is that it is not absorbed into the system and therefore non-caloric. It has not been approved as a sweetener by the FDA and is sold as a dietary supplement only. This is available at Whole Foods Market and other similar food stores. It comes in powder and liquid form. I am sorry to say it does have a slight after taste, which I am sure over time, one could get used to.

FruitSource® is the brand name of a granulated sweetener made from grape juice concentrate and rice syrup. When you add this to a hot drink its sweetness diminishes, so you may find you use a little more. Sucanat® is the branded ingredient made

## CHEF'S RECIPE

### Cucumber Salad with Spicy Wasabi Dressing

- 1 ½ teas. dry wasabi (or to taste)
- 2 cucumbers (peeled, seeded and ¼ in. sliced)
- 2 tbs. rice wine vinegar
- 1 teas. sugar
- 1 tbs. sesame oil
- salt and pepper
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 tbs. sesame seeds toasted

Mix wasabi powder with ½ teas. warm water (or use the pre-made in a tube)

Whisk together all the ingredients except for the cucumbers. Just before serving add cucumber, green onion and sesame seeds.

If you don't have rice wine vinegar, apple cider vinegar works well as well as sherry vinegar.

from evaporated sugar cane juice. It resembles raw sugar and is less sweet and considered to be the least refined. Honey is a sweetener we are all familiar with, and is very sweet to the taste. It comes in many flavors and is a good alternative in cooking.

Fructose is known as fruit sugar and is the sweetest of all simple sugars. It does have a caloric value of one-fourth of that of refined sugar.

Most people use sugar substitutes to avoid the calories in sugar, but we have no scientific evidence showing that anyone has lost weight as a direct result of using sucralose or any other sugar substitute. In fact, the obesity epidemic still continues.

Refined sugar is the key ingredient in processed foods and is used to cover up the taste deficiency of these highly processed foods.

The USDA advises people who eat a 2,000-calorie healthful diet to limit the sugar they consume to 10 teaspoons per day. Since sugar is hidden in many things we eat regularly, we must read the labels carefully. Most are listed as cane, beet sugar, high-fructose corn syrup and dextrose.

Maybe if we look at other ways to cut back on the over-refined white foods, we can make a little room for some really

good natural products that are good for us. And maybe we can let just a little sugar back into our lives.

Check out these sites for more information:

- [laleva.com](http://laleva.com)
- [mercola.com](http://mercola.com)
- [wisdomnaturalbrands.com](http://wisdomnaturalbrands.com)
- [aboutsweeteners.com](http://aboutsweeteners.com)
- [bellaonline.com](http://bellaonline.com)

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