

SUGAR SUBSTITUTES

Most people think that sugar is the first thing that should be avoided with diabetes. Although this was believed to be true many years ago, it is now recognized that someone with diabetes can, safely eat **small** amounts of added sugar and foods naturally containing sugar. This is because different types of sugar have different effects on blood glucose levels.

A **small amount** of sugar is an amount that can be measured by 1 to 2 teaspoons, at each meal. Examples of this would be:

- A scrape of regular jam or honey on a piece of grainy toast
- Sugar in savory food like baked beans and tomato sauce
- A teaspoon of sugar or honey on porridge

For successful inclusion of this **small amount** of sugar, the key is to combine **s-l-o-w-l-y** digested and quickly digested carbohydrate at the same meal. For information on achieving this, please refer to: The Carbohydrate Connection Fact Sheet.

Situations will arise where the **small amount** of sugar is greatly exceeded. Some examples include soft drink, cordial, jelly and other sweet foods. In this case, either avoid sugar or use artificially sweetened products or sweeteners.

Other examples where artificial sweeteners may be used, is in the preparation of sweet-based foods where a small amount of added sugar would not be sufficient. When incorporating artificial sweeteners into cakes or biscuits, the recipe should still be low in fat (particularly low in saturated fat) and high in fibre where possible.

There are two main categories of artificial sweeteners as indicated below:

1) Non-Nutritive. These contain no calories and do not affect the blood glucose levels.

- Splenda
- Saccharin
- Cyclamate
- Aspartame

2) Nutritive. These contain calories and have varying effect on the blood glucose level.

- Sorbitol / Mannitol/ Xylitol (if consumed in large amounts, may have a laxative effect)
- Maltodextrin

- It is advised that cyclamate and saccharin be avoided when pregnant
- Choose from a variety of sweeteners
- For additional individualized information, please refer to an Accredited Practicing Dietitian



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