

NATUROPATH

Artificial Sweeteners

Amongst this era of obesity and diabetes epidemics, sugar has indeed become an enemy. Artificial sweeteners are being used in an endeavour to improve health, but is this sensible?

Stable blood sugar is absolutely vital to wellness and healthy ageing. Sugar if abused can intensify disease processes, so our choice of sweeteners becomes important. The safety and efficacy of synthetic, man-made, artificial sweeteners, such as Aspartame, Sucralose (Splenda), and Saccharin, is still controversial. Industry experts continue to debate their use for human consumption.

These sweeteners also do not provide a feeling of fullness and can increase the tendency to over-indulge or reach for more food when not fully satisfied.

Aspartame has three ingredients (amino acids phenylalanine, aspartic acid and methanol – wood alcohol) and those convinced of its safety explain that the three solely can be used by the body. Aspartate when ingested solely can excite the brain, in turn leading to subtle degeneration of neurons. Methanol is oxidized to formaldehyde and formic acid in the body, both being dramatically toxic. Phenylalanine if not metabolized correctly also can be found to be carcinogenic.

The American FDA monitors adverse reactions and many have been reported, with headaches being one of the highest. If you experience unexplained headaches please do look at your choice of sweetener. The sugar-free labels are always ones to be wary of, including diet soft drinks and confectionary.

If you cook fruits and sweet vegetables (pumpkin and kumara) slowly, the natural sugars intensify dramatically. Try baking a whole pumpkin on a very long slow heat and see how sweet it is. Honey in small amounts, sugar in minute portions or Stevia are all healthier options for sweetening our foods.



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