

Health Advice # 10:

Artificial sweeteners

1) Saccharine: Street Name: **Sweet 'n Low**: This is the oldest artificial sweetener originally used as a substitute for diabetics. In the 1970's, animal tests were conducted that resulted in various cancers (uterus, skin, bladder) associated with the artificial sweetener. The USDA slapped a "hazardous to your health" label on the substance and left it alone. Fast forward to 2000, more studies showed the original studies to be inconclusive, the "hazardous" label was removed and saccharine was upgraded from an unhealthy artificial sweetener to a questionable artificial sweetener. Out of the many choices, saccharine seems to have the most risks, especially for pregnant women, as the substance transfers to the unborn fetus. Also, many people avoid saccharine simply because the original source is petroleum!

2) Aspartame: Street Name: **Equal, NutraSweet**: Aspartame was the "healthy" artificial sweetener alternative to saccharine. It is a combination of phenylalanine and aspartic acid (amino acids) with methanol. It was the go-to for diet sodas for years, though many people are turned off by its distinct taste. Aspartame has been proven to cause problems with people who do not metabolize phenylalanine at a normal rate. It has also been shown to cause complications for people with liver disease, and (again) pregnant women.

3) Sucralose: Street Name: **Splenda**: Sucralose is actually made from real sugar. Sugar is chemically altered to form the artificial sweetener, hydrogen oxygen components are swapped out with chlorine molecules. Sucralose arrived on the scene in 1998, so not as much research has been performed to prove whether or not the artificial sweetener is healthy or harmful, but so far all the research seems to suggest there aren't any major harmful effects. New studies come out every month, though nothing has conclusively proven sucralose as a harmful artificial sweetener. It seems to be the winner out of the three mentioned so far. Though some people claim to have allergic reactions to the sweetener. It is always advisable to test the product before jumping in whole hog (try a slice of fake cake, not the whole thing).

4) Stevia: Street Name: **Stevia**: Stevia is the natural alternative; many claim it is the healthiest artificial sweetener. **Stevia is an actual plant**, originally from Paraguay, the sweetener usually comes as a powder extract. There have been **no known harmful effects** of Stevia.

**To your health! Anima Sana in Corpore Sano (a healthy mind in a healthy body)
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