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## 5 Reasons To Avoid Artificial Sweeteners



Cutting your sugar intake is crucial in order to prevent diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. Unfortunately the average American consumes 76 pounds of added sugar per year. That's 23 teaspoons a day! The largest contributor to sugar intake? Soda and sugar-sweetened beverages.

For many, the seemingly easy fix is to start using artificial sweeteners such as sucralose, saccharin, aspartame, and acesulfame potassium, instead of sugar. Unfortunately, these artificial sweeteners have some pretty dark downsides:

1. Artificial sweeteners may actually increase sugar cravings.

Because artificial sweeteners are so much sweeter than sugar, they tend to make you crave sugar more.

2. They're linked to diabetes.

In a study of more than 5,000 people, drinking one diet soda or more on a daily basis was associated with a 67% increased risk for diabetes. This is a very striking result! Switching to diet soda is often recommended to people with diabetes or pre-diabetes. This recommendation is ill-advised as it seems that diet soda may actually play a role in increasing diabetes risk.

3. They have been linked to cancer in animals.

In animal studies, artificial sweeteners like sucralose, saccharin, and aspartame have been associated with an increased risk of cancer.

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*NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with PROJECT: PFC's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.*

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### **3. They have been linked to cancer in animals.**

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### **4. They can be harmful during pregnancy.**

A study in women noted that artificial sweetener consumption during pregnancy was associated with an increased risk for pre-term labor.

### **5. Artificial sweeteners, specifically sucralose, may change how your body responds to carbohydrates.**

Your blood sugar and insulin levels may actually rise higher when you have carbohydrates with or after drinking a sucralose-sweetened beverage. One of the functions of insulin in your body is to trigger fat storage. If your insulin levels are higher, it is more likely that you will gain weight or it may be harder for you to lose weight.

### **So can you have a healthy relationship with sweets?**

The bottom line is that artificial sweeteners may actually play a role in exacerbating the very conditions that they are meant to address. Instead of drinking diet soda, try sparkling water with a splash of 100% fruit juice. Alternatively, add cucumber or lemon slices to your water for a refreshing and healthy beverage. For other desserts, use natural sweeteners or use fruit, which is naturally sweet, to make healthier desserts.