

Exploring the safety of artificial sweeteners

By **BARBARA INTERMILL**
Monterey Herald

In response to a recent column about the safety of sugar substitutes, reader P.S. from Ohio asks: “What are your sources for this article? I have read in several sources which I consider reputable that aspartame and acesulfame are carcinogens. However, on the internet there is mixed information.”

Ah, yes, the internet is teeming with mixed information on many nutrition topics, especially this one. As I mentioned previously, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has the major responsibility to review the available evidence on the safety of food (and drug) products before they can be sold in the U.S.

Currently, the FDA has approved six sweeteners, including aspartame (brand name Equal) and acesulf-



Dreamstime-TNS

Currently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved six sweeteners, including aspartame (brand name Equal) and acesulfame potassium (brand name Sweet One) as food additives.

fame potassium (brand name Sweet One) as food additives. Three other plant-based sweeteners — stevia, monk fruit and thaumatin — have been designated “generally recognized as safe” for their intended use.

Regarding carcinogens, several reputable sources, including the American Cancer Society and the American Institute for Cancer Research note that there is no conclusive evidence to link sugar substi-

tutes to cancer.

That said, some scientific articles continue to question the safety of sugar substitutes. As they emerge, the FDA as well as the European Food Safety Authority re-examine the findings to

see if any changes need to be made in their approval of the products. To date, neither agency has found valid evidence to change their current guidelines on the use any of the approved sugar substitutes.

I also mentioned previously that acceptable daily intakes have been set for each approved sugar substitute. The ADI is determined from research in which the highest dose an animal can consume without an adverse effect is then lowered another 100 times, to be extra safe.

To put this in perspective, I estimated my own ADI for aspartame, which is 50 milligrams per kilogram of my current weight, which I will not divulge. If my calculations are correct, I would need to consume 85 packets of Equal or 15 cans of diet soda every day for the rest of my life to reach the acceptable daily intake for aspartame. That’s a huge

margin of safety.

So while reputable scientists continue to study the overall impact of sugar substitutes on our health, I feel comfortable with the 2022 guidelines from the American Diabetes Association, which state that alternate sweeteners “may be an acceptable substitute” for regular sweeteners such as sugar, honey and agave syrup “when consumed in moderation. However, people with diabetes should be encouraged to decrease both (sugar) sweetened and nonnutritive (sugar substitute) sweetened beverages, with an emphasis on water intake.”

I’d say that’s good advice for us all.

■ *Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. She is the author of “Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating.” Email her at barbara@quinessentialnutrition.com.*

There are healthy foods that make ideal daily snacks

By **NANCY CLANTON**
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

We all love our snacks. They not only hold us over until our next big meal, but they also satisfy our need for crispy, crunchy, sweet and savory treats.

Too much snacking on the wrong foods, however, can lead to health problems. So Eat This, Not That asked some nutritionists what they munch on every day.

Sarah Schlichter, MPH, RD, a registered dietitian and owner of Bucket List Tummy, prefers granola, “because it’s crunchy and satisfying, filling and offers a balanced mix of protein, fat, carbohydrates, and fiber,” she told Eat This, Not That. “I love adding it to my oatmeal or yogurt for some

crunch, or even eating a handful with a spoonful of peanut butter.”

Elizabeth Ward, MS, RD, co-author of “The Menopause Diet Plan,” prefers a snack that helps her bones, heart and brain. “Every day I have plain Greek yogurt and frozen cherries (I microwave them for about 30 seconds first). The cherries are so naturally sweet that I don’t

have to add any sugar to the yogurt. Nutrition-wise, this snack helps me to include a serving of fruit and dairy”

Rice cakes have a bad reputation for not having a lot of flavor. But Kacie Barnes, MCN, RDN, creator of Mama Knows Nutrition, knows how to jazz them up with both flavor and nutrition. “My go-to snack is a brown rice cake topped with

mashed avocado and flaky sea salt. ... The fat from the avocado is so satisfying that it completely tides me over until dinner. I love the crunch of the rice cake, and I choose brown rice cakes for the fiber.”

Tejal Pathak, MS, RD, CDCES, registered dietitian and owner of TejRD, prefers baby cucumbers because they’re easy to carry around

and need no refrigeration. “With 95% water it is great for hydration, it is also low glycemic food, provides cardiovascular benefits and can aid with regular bowel movement.”

When Theresa Gentile, MS, RDN, CDN, a Brooklyn-based registered dietitian, has the munchies, she turns to a treat we likely all have in our pantries: peanut

butter. “I snack on peanut butter every day. ... Sometimes I’ll put it on a rice cake, or in a smoothie, or sometimes I eat it alongside an apple.”

Just remember that snacking isn’t bad for you, but what you snack on can be. Instead of sweets or fried treats, pick foods with protein, healthy fat and/or fiber to get you through the day.

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ACROSS

- Toga party site
- Fellow
- Make tracks
- Laundry load
- Storytelling dance
- Well-worn
- Precious
- Long-legged wader
- Go downhill
- MPG monitor
- The ones here
- Sticks out
- Eject
- Golf term
- “No — luck!”
- Puppy plaints
- Percent ending
- Import and export
- Seance sound
- Cubbyhole
- What is more
- Diver’s need
- La femme
- Dingbat
- Damp

DOWN

- Email subj. starter
- “The Facts of Life” star
- Sly — fox
- Hurled
- “Wool” on clay sheep
- Wheel part
- Boxing’s greatest

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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- Sticky stuff
- Nozzle site
- Genres
- McClurg or Brickell
- Furtive whisper
- Main rte.
- Whirl
- Angel’s topper
- Popular cookie
- Butcher’s need
- Univ. degrees
- Russian river
- Mideast country
- Distress
- Frisky
- Geological periods
- Barbie’s beau
- Spandex maker
- Column order
- Jet engine noise
- Big do
- Doubtful
- Golden Rule word
- Dory’s need
- Broncos org.
- Self-importance
- Roman sun god
- Mexican Mrs.

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- VFW
- Baker Elk’s Lodge
- Main Event
- Baker City Fire Dept.
- Haines Sell-Rite
- Idle Hour
- Salvation Army

104 Community Calendar

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Corner of Main at Birch in Union

LA GRANDE LIONS CLUB
Meets 2nd & 4th Monday of each month @ 12 PM
Union County Senior Center
1504 N. Albany St., La Grande

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Senior Center
2810 Cedar St., Baker City
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