

## *The Lunchbox Nutritionist* *Kathleen Searles MS, RD, LDN*



Everywhere you look, there seems to be talk about sugar and sugar substitutes, and with this talk comes an abundance of confusion on what is the best “sweetener” to use. This month I am clarifying the confusion for you and providing a simple breakdown of the newest plant based sweeteners as well as some of the popular alternatives to sugar and how they can be used.

I hope you enjoy this issue. If you are looking for a speaker for your organization to discuss tips to empower your team to a healthier life, contact me today!

**- Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, CSSD, LDN**

### **Sweet Substitute**

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There are many different forms of sugar and sugar alternatives and honestly it can all be very confusing! Here is a quick reference and breakdown of the most popular “sweet substitutes”.

1. Stevia-  
What is it? A natural sweetener, extracted from the leaves of the stevia plant  
What’s in it? Made from stevia leaf extract and inulin



### **Basic Facts About Sugar:**



Sugar comes in a variety of forms; the most common names you will find include corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), sorbitol, galactose, corn sweeteners, honey, sucrose, turbinado, dextrin, raw sugar, dextrose, fruit juice concentrate, molasses, sorghum, invert sugar, malt, maple syrup, fructose, cane sugar and brown sugar.

- It is considered a simple carbohydrate
- There are three forms of sugar recognized in the body: Sucrose, Lactose and Maltose
- Sugar provides 4 calories per gram (for example if a food label

Calories: Provides 0 calories per 1 serving packet  
How to substitute for sugar: 10 – 15 times sweeter than sugar; 1 packet is equal to 1 tbsp. of sugar.

#### 2. Truvia-

What is it? A natural sweetener, extracted from the leaves of the stevia plant

What's in it: Made from erythritol, stevia leaf extract, and natural flavors.

Calories: Provides 0 calories per 1 serving packet.

How to substitute for sugar: One packet provides same sweetness as 2 tsp. of sugar.

#### 3. Nectresse-

What is it? Sweetness extracted from the Monk fruit (a small round melon) created by the makers of Splenda

What's in it? It contains monk fruit extract, erythritol, sugar, and molasses.

Calories: It provides 0 calories per 1 packet serving.

How to substitute for sugar: 150-200 times sweeter than sugar; 1 packet is equal to the sweetness of 2 tsp. of sugar.

#### 4. Agave Nectar-

What is it? A natural sweetener extracted from the core of the Blue Agave plant; 25% sweeter than sugar.

What's in it? Made from Organic Blue Agave nectar (light).

Calories: Provides 60 calories from 1 tbsp.

How to substitute for sugar:  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a tbsp. is equal to 1 tbsp. of sugar. Be aware of other necessary recipe changes on an individual basis.

#### 5. Sugar Alcohols-

What is it: Occur naturally in a variety of fruits and vegetables, but are commercially produced from carbohydrates such as sucrose, glucose, and starch. Common sugar alcohols are mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol, lactitol, isomalt, maltitol and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates (HSH)

What's in it: Made from various polyols

Calories: Provides 0-3 calories/gram (varies depending on the particular sugar alcohol) at less than 20 g/ day

How to substitute for sugar: Sugar alcohols are not generally used by the public; and instead are applied in industrial settings

#### 6. Honey-

What is it? A natural sweetener made by bees for their own nourishment

What's in it? Made from water, fructose, glucose, other sugars, minerals, amino acids, proteins

Calories: Provides 127 calories per 1oz. serving

How to substitute for sugar: It is about 25% sweeter than sugar. Substitute  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of

has 10 grams of sugar, then 40 calories are from sugar)

- When sugar is consumed, it goes directly into the blood to be used as energy

- Sugar contains no nutritional benefits unless consumed from natural sources: Fruits, Vegetables AND Milk

### **Statements on Sugar**

#### **Substitute Safety:**

There is a lot of mixed feelings about sugar and sugar substitutes. Here are just a few summaries of position papers to help you, the consumer. If you have additional questions or concerns contact me directly.

#### **According to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines of Academy (DGA)**

The DGA contains a small number of statements related to the use of NNS (Nonnutritive Sweeteners). An important recommendation is to control total energy(calorie) intake and increase physical activity to manage one's personal body weight. Studies show that people who adopt eating patterns that are low in energy density improve weight loss and weight maintenance, and may also be associated with a lower risk of type 2 diabetes in adults. Replacing NNS for higher-energy foods and beverages can decrease overall energy intake, but evidence of their effectiveness for weight management is limited and currently being studied.

#### **According to the American Diabetes Association**

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) issued a statement in 2008 that "Sugar alcohols and nonnutritive sweeteners are safe when consumed within the daily intake levels established by the Food and Drug Administration". Suggestions for management of diabetes include monitoring carbohydrate intake through carbohydrate counting, choices, and/or experience-based estimation to achieve glycemic control. Selecting NNS instead of nutritive

honey for 1 cup of sugar. Be aware of other necessary recipe changes on an individual basis

7. Molasses-

What is it? The byproduct of the sugar refining process

What's in it? Made from various natural sugar sources

Calories: Provides 32 calories per 2 tsp.

How to substitute for sugar: ½ cup molasses equals 1 cup of sugar.

### Blueberry Parfait with Gingersnap Granola



Recipe by: Driscoll's Berries

<http://www.driscolls.com/>

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes plus cooling

Servings: 4 servings

For breakfast or dessert, this blend of creamy yogurt, juicy blueberries and crunchy granola is a star. The warm spices of gingersnap cookies add a taste of decadence! The recipe makes 4 cups granola. Use half for parfaits and store the remaining in an airtight container.

Granola

1/3 cups honey

1/4 cups canola oil

2 tablespoon molasses

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups old-fashioned oats

1 cup pumpkin seeds

3/4 teaspoon ground ginger

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/8 teaspoon ground cloves

1/8 teaspoon salt

Parfait

4 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt (or substitute for plain low-fat Greek Yogurt for a boost in protein and reduced total carbohydrates)

2 cups Driscoll's Blueberries

sweeteners is one approach and step to decreasing carbohydrate intake.

### According to the National Cancer Institute

The National Cancer Institute made a statement in 2009 on NNS and cancer. The Institute declared that there is no clear evidence that the NNS available commercially in the United States (and approved by the FDA) are connected with cancer risk in human beings.

Resource: Fitch, Cindy, PhD, RD, and Kathryn S. Keim, PhD, RD, LDN. "Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Use of Nutritive and Nonnutritive Sweeteners." Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Use of Nutritive and Nonnutritive Sweeteners 112.5 (2012): 739-58. [Eatright.org](http://eatright.org). Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Web.

### Pink, Blue, Yellow, White, & Brown?

Everyone is used to the big dilemma when dining out: Should you select the Pink, Blue, Yellow, White or Brown Sweetener? Here is a simple breakdown of the differences so that you can make a more informed decision.



Pink-Sweet'n Low: Developed in 1957, Sweet'n Low is a no-calorie sweetener that is derived from saccharin. It also contains dextrose and cream of tartar. It is 300 times sweeter than sucrose or common sugar.

Blue-Equal: On the market for over 25 years, Equal is a no-calorie sweetener made from dextrose with maltodextrin and the sweetening ingredients aspartame and acesulfame potassium. The product is 200 times sweeter than sucrose or common sugar.

Yellow-Splenda: Created by British College and FDA approved in 1998, it is a 0-calorie sweetener made from sucralose (containing dextrose and maltodextrin). It is 600 times sweeter

Preheat oven to 325°F. Lightly grease rimmed baking sheet.

Whisk together honey, oil, molasses and vanilla in a large bowl. Combine oats, pumpkin seeds, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and salt in a medium bowl. Add oat mixture to molasses mixture and stir until evenly coated. Spread mixture on prepared baking sheet.

Bake about 25 minutes or until golden brown, stirring every 10 minutes. Let granola cool 10 minutes, stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick to the baking sheet. Transfer to bowl or dish to cool completely.

Make 2 layers of 1/2 cup yogurt, 1/4 cup granola and 1/4 cup blueberries in a parfait or wine glass. Repeat with remaining yogurt, blueberries and granola.

Note

The granola recipe makes 4 cups granola.

Store remaining in air-tight container.

Calories: 337.93, Total Fat: 6.24g, Saturated Fat: 1.82g, Cholesterol: 13.34mg, Sodium: 116.32mg, Total Carbohydrates: 61.38g, Dietary Fiber: 2.36g, Protein: 9.10g

### Quote of the Month:

"Don't wreck a sublime chocolate experience by feeling guilty."

than sucrose or common sugar.

White-Table Sugar: The most commonly known granulated sugar can be found just about everywhere. A typical packet of sugar found in most restaurants will contain approximately 1 tsp. of sugar; 1 tsp. of sugar provides 15 calories.

Brown-Sugar in the Raw: Created from unbleached cane sugar (sucrose) which therefore helps it maintain its golden to light brown coloring. A typical packet of raw sugar will contain approximately 1.33 tsp. and provide 20 calories.

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### About Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LDN

I am a Registered Dietitian and am licensed to practice in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. The exciting field of nutrition has been my passion ever since I took a foods class with my friends in high school.

Through my work in different states and different settings I have developed my philosophy of helping people improve their diets by finding foods that fit into their particular routines, budgets, and preferences. I look forward to helping you solve your nutrition challenges with tasty and satisfying foods.