



Commentary

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Commentary: "Lite" Reading from the Calorie Control Council

The Calorie Control Council (the "Council") is an international association representing the low-calorie and reduced-fat food and beverage industry. Companies that make and use low-calorie sweeteners are among the Council's members. Now, more than ever consumers are seeking diet and health information from credible and reliable sources. The Calorie Control Council serves as a reliable health information resource with experts available to assist with questions and concerns from consumers, health professionals, and the media.

Please use the Council as a resource when looking for information on low calorie and "lite" ingredients and the products that contain them. For more information, visit the Council's website at www.caloriecontrol.org.



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Experts Weigh In

Leading Health Experts Support Use of Low-Calorie Sweeteners

According to statements released earlier this year by three leading health organizations, using non-nutritive sweeteners may help individuals effectively manage their weight and aid in maintaining glucose levels within the normal range.

In July, the American Heart Association (AHA) and American Diabetes Association (ADA) released a joint statement on non-nutritive sweeteners (also known as low-calorie sweeteners). The statement focused on six FDA-approved nonnutritive sweeteners: aspartame, neotame, saccharin, sucralose, acesulfame-K, and stevia and their role in helping Americans consume less sugar. The authors conducted a review of the literature published after 2000, which used human subjects, and noted that the use of products sweetened with low-calorie sweeteners does not cause weight gain, and may, in fact, lead to modest weight loss. They also concluded that the available evidence refuted or was insufficient to support the hypothesis that non-nutritive sweeteners increase appetite, hunger, or energy intake.

The authors of the AHA/ADA position paper noted that the few studies that have reported an association between low-calorie sweeteners and undesirable health conditions such as weight gain have not shown that low-calorie sweeteners actually caused the unfavorable outcomes. It was likely that individuals chose to use low-calorie sweeteners to improve their weight and/or health status rather than the other way around. Based on the body of research, the AHA and ADA concluded, "Substituting non-nutritive [low-calorie] sweeteners for added sugars in beverages and other foods has the potential to help people reach and maintain a healthy body weight and help people with diabetes with glucose control." They stipulated, however, that the benefits of non-nutritive sweeteners depend on where they fit in the context of the daily diet.



The AHA/ADA statement came a couple of months after the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (the Academy, formerly the American Dietetic Association) released its position paper on the use of nutritive and non-nutritive sweeteners in the May issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. The Academy concluded, "It is the position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that consumers can safely enjoy a range of nutritive sweeteners and nonnutritive sweeteners when consumed within an eating plan that is guided by current federal nutrition recommendations, such as the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Dietary Reference Intakes, as well as individual health goals and personal preference."

The use of low-calorie sweeteners may be one strategy to help people manage their weight and achieve their health goals. More information on low-calorie sweeteners can be found at www.caloriecontrol.org.

Polyols Are an Effective Way to Consume Less Sugar

A new article in *Food Technology* guides food scientists on how to reduce the sugar in foods by using polyols. Sugar reduction has become a goal for consumers, government, and industry as nutrition experts have put an emphasis on reducing intake of added sugars and consuming fewer calories. "Reduced sugar" products may be easier to formulate than sugar-free products since only a portion of the sugar needs to be replaced for "reduced sugar" labeling. Many of a food or beverage's original characteristics may be maintained with the replacement of sugars by polyols, also known as sugar alcohols. Excellent tasting sugar free products can also be developed by using polyols. Polyols are in a unique position to assist with reduced-sugar or sugar free reformulations since they only have about half of the calories of sugar.

To read the full article, "Sugar Reduction with Polyols," click [here](#).

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Experts Weigh In

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Filling the Fiber “Gap”: A Round Table Discussion

In a roundtable discussion, experts gathered to identify challenges and generate solutions to increase Americans’ fiber intake. Following the meeting, they published a paper, “Filling America’s Fiber Gap: Probing Realistic Solutions,” with practical advice for consumers to incorporate more fiber into their diet. They noted “Evidence suggests that fiber plays a critical role in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, and prediabetes and type 2-diabetes, and is essential for optimal digestive health.” Despite these beneficial effects, more than 90% of Americans are consuming less than the recommended daily amount of fiber (14 grams of fiber for every 1000 calories consumed per Institute of Medicine recommendations).

Evidence has shown that fiber intake and energy intake are closely linked. With obesity as a pervasive problem, the challenge is to increase fiber intake without increasing caloric intake. Added fibers can play a role in addressing this issue. Most Americans meet or exceed recommended intake of grain-based foods. The paper discussed swapping out low-fiber grain products with whole grain or fiber-enriched grains to increase fiber intake without affecting energy intake.

An additional challenge identified was the widely held belief that “whole grains” and “fiber” are synonymous, which may lead some individuals to believe they are consuming more fiber than they really are. The authors noted that, “All whole grain foods do not qualify as a good source of fiber. There is a need in future research to clearly delineate between whole grains and fiber to avoid the interchange of the food (whole grains) with the nutrient (fiber).” They instead suggest that fiber content should be used as a “marker of whole grain quality.”

For more information, on fiber, please visit fiberfacts.org.



Fiber & Satiety – It's All in the Details

The nuances of research can be tough to interpret. For example, take a recent study on the effects of fermentable fiber on satiety. Some reports questioned whether fiber was helpful with appetite based on the research. However, the study findings did not demonstrate that eating fiber does not lead to satiety, only that one specific type of fiber at a certain dose used in the study was not as effective in suppressing hunger as researchers thought it might be. As the study authors noted, “The health benefits of increased fiber consumption are well established...” Fibers have different properties (i.e. bulking, viscosity, and fermentation) which lead to different health benefits. As an explanation for their findings, they suggested that another property of fiber, such as viscosity may play a greater role in satiety than fiber’s fermentation effect. They also noted that the effects of fiber consumption may be delayed or require prolonged exposure to fibers.

Trends and Statistics

Obesity Plateaus While the Use of Low-Calorie Sweeteners Rises

While the obesity epidemic is by no means resolved, a plateau or decline of obesity rates in the U.S. may be on the horizon. According to a study in the January 2012 issue of *Journal of the American Medical Association*, rates of obesity in the US have leveled off. These findings correspond with a Gallup poll conducted in the third quarter of 2011 which reported that the percentage of Americans who are overweight or obese declined slightly.

Another report published by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child Health and Statistics declared that the prevalence of obesity in children aged 6-17 has remained relatively steady over the past few years, despite some reports to the contrary.

At the same time, research has shown that more people are now opting for low-calorie products as part of a healthful diet. A study in the August issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* looked at recent trends in the consumption of food and beverages that contain low-calorie sweeteners in the United States. Researchers used data gathered in the government collected national dataset, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), comparing 1999-2000 and 2007-2008. The results showed that the use of low-calorie sweetener-containing beverages significantly increased during this period while the consumption of low-calorie sweetener-containing foods remained relatively unchanged. The authors reported that 28% of the total US population consumes products containing low-calorie sweeteners. Increases in the consumption of low-calorie sweetener-containing beverages were most notable for children, females, and obese adults. The statistics in that study correspond with a State of the Industry Report, which noted a 3.4% increase in annual sales of diet beverages through April 2012.

With obesity rates remaining steady and a simultaneous increase in the use of low-calorie sweeteners, it is quite possible that individuals are using low-calorie sweeteners to aid in weight management, and that it is working. That theory parallels the numerous studies that have shown that low-calorie sweeteners may help people in losing or maintaining weight loss. A recent study conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill demonstrated that drinking diet soda or water helped people shed more pounds than those who only received dietary counseling. Researchers randomly assigned a group of overweight adults to one of three groups: one that drank water; one that drank diet beverages; and a control group (who only received dietary counseling, along with the other groups). After six months, both groups (water and diet soda) lost four or five pounds, on average but those consuming diet beverages had a greater calorie reduction and there was a decrease in calories from food intake as well.



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Do you love stevia, the natural low-calorie sweetener? Or do you want to know more about it? SteviaBenefits is here to share and answer questions.

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Trends and Statistics

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Sleep Deprivation, T.V. Viewing, Alcohol Consumption Linked to Obesity

In an effort to tackle the obesity epidemic, researchers continue to conduct studies to identify potential risk factors for obesity. According to a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, sleep deprivation, television viewing, and alcohol consumption may be causing obesity. Chapman et al conducted a meta-analysis of clinical studies that examined the relationship between three environmental factors (sleep deprivation, television viewing, and alcohol consumption) and food intake. The results showed that these three factors do cause increases in food intake, with alcohol consumption having the most significant effect. The authors explained that environmental factors, such as the ones studied, may cause obesity by increasing the reward value one experiences from eating and decreasing inhibitory control over food. In other words, higher rewards coupled with lowered inhibitions can lead to obesity. However, the authors did have some good news. Changing these lifestyle habits can reverse the trends seen and protect against future weight gain.

Blogging Your Way to a Smaller Size

For individuals looking to lose weight, blogging may be the perfect prescription. One successful weight loss blogger, Roni Noone, who lost 70 pounds, is a living testament to that idea. She has been blogging for over five years and credits it for her success. Other weight loss bloggers have said that blogging provides them with an outlet to express the trials and triumphs during their weight loss journey and can provide support and accountability. Some of their stories can be viewed [here](#).

There are plenty of weight loss blogs out there. If you're looking for a good place to start, check out the ones below.

I Love Diet Soda

"I Love Diet Soda" follows the misadventures of a young woman, through her transition from college to the real world. Times can be tough, budgets can be tight, and hours spent at the office can be long, but nothing is impossible as long as she has her trusty sidekick – a can of cold diet soda.

Sugar Free Style

"Sugar Free Style" is the scoop on how Audrey Taylor, a modern working gal, manages to tackle the trials and tribulations of the everyday, while staying fit and fabulous with the help of sugar-free foods and beverages.

Get Physical

New Trends in Nutrition and Physical Activity

The latest research shows that college students may be becoming more interested in nutrition and healthy eating. From 2004 to 2011, there was an 84% increase in the number of students graduating with a degree in the nutrition field, according to the Academy of

Nutrition and Dietetics. Universities like the University of Maine are experiencing this trend first-hand and have seen larger enrollments in their nutrition and food science department.

While there may be greater interest in nutrition, there seems to be less interest in physical activity. A study published in *Obesity Reviews* looked at physical activity in different settings such as at home and work in five different countries (U.S., U.K. Brazil, China, and India) between 1961 and 2009. It found a significant decline in physical activity across the globe with the greatest decline being at work.

The study is available for viewing [here](#).



Feed Your Mind

Websites

The Calorie Control Council sponsors a multitude of websites that can help communicate information on the importance of diet, physical activity and weight control in achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Many of the sites also separate fact from fiction regarding low calorie sweeteners and several of the sites are available in multiple languages. Check out these resources...

[The Skinny on Low Cal](#)

[The Calorie Control Council](#)

[Calories Count](#)

[Acesulfame potassium](#)

[Aspartame](#)

[Cyclamate](#)

[Fiber](#)

[Fructose](#)

[Polyols](#)

[Saccharin](#)

[Sucratose](#)

[Stevia](#)

Self-Studies Available for Nutrition Professionals

The Calorie Control Council is a Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) accredited continuing professional education (CPE) provider. This means dietitians and dietetic technicians can now receive CPEs by using the self-studies available at www.caloriecontrol.org.

The polyol and fiber self-studies are now available!

Polyols: A Primer for Dietetic Professionals:

Polyols are a unique group of sweeteners with the taste and texture of sugar for only half the calories. The polyol self-study module provides information on the types of polyols found in foods, the various uses of polyols, their health effects, and ways to counsel clients to incorporate polyols into a healthful diet.

Dietary Fiber Ingredients: Expanding Options for Meeting Dietary Fiber Requirements:

Fibers are an important part of a balanced diet and may have a protective effect against several diseases. This self-study provides information on the recommended daily intake of fiber, the different types of fiber, the major mechanisms through which dietary fibers provide health benefits, and identifies several fiber-containing ingredients used in foods and beverages.

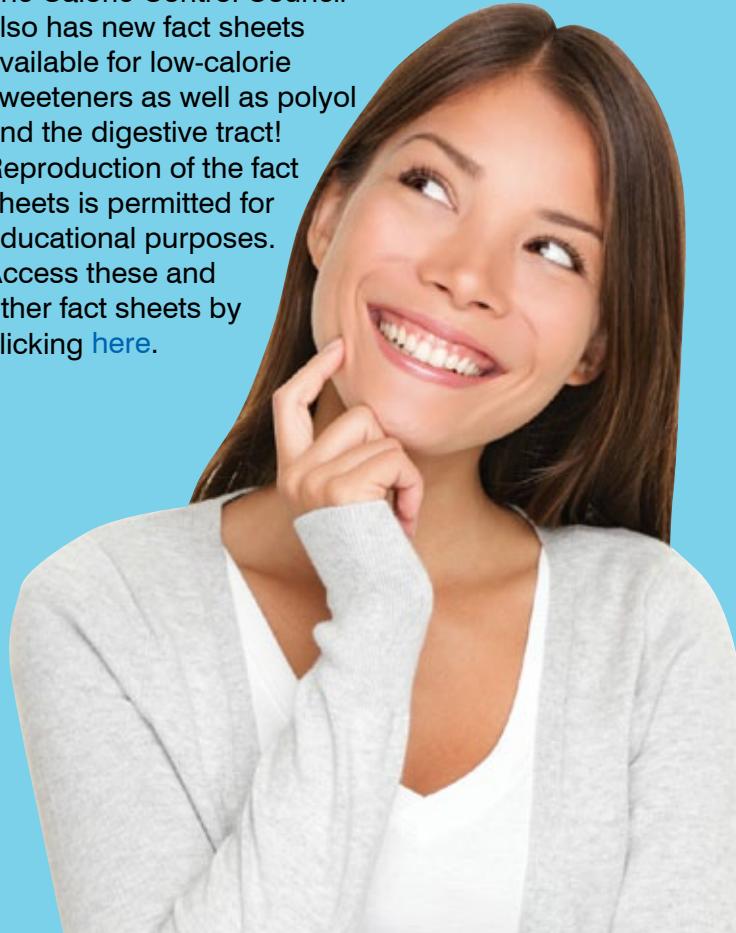
Demystifying FDA's Food Ingredient Approval Process

Dietitians and other health professionals hear questions every day about whether the foods in grocery stores or restaurants are healthy and safe. Processed foods, complex ingredient names, low-calorie sweeteners, and preservatives, are just a few examples of ingredient-related questions asked by consumers. This module provides an in-depth exploration of the regulations for food additives.

Patient Education Handouts

The Calorie Control Council also has new fact sheets available for low-calorie sweeteners as well as polyol and the digestive tract!

Reproduction of the fact sheets is permitted for educational purposes. Access these and other fact sheets by clicking [here](#).



Sweet Substitutes

Protect Your Smile with Polyols

According to a review published in *Advances in Dental Research*, one of the best ways to protect your smile may be to consume more xylitol. Xylitol is a sugar replacer that has also been shown to reduce dental caries (tooth decay) in children and adults. Researchers reviewed the studies done on xylitol and dental caries since 2008, and found that research supported the role of xylitol in preventing and reducing the occurrence of dental caries. Visit “[Protect Your Smile with Polyols](#)” to read more about this research review, or “[Polyols and Oral Health](#)” to learn more about all of the research on polyols and dental health.

CFSAN Webinar on Food and Nutrition Available

In May, the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) and the Joint Institute of Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN) announced the availability of recordings from the two day Food and Nutrition Webinar held March 5-6, 2012. The webinar, which was designed for nutrition professionals, featured presentations on label claims, menu labeling, biotechnology, and generally recognized as safe (GRAS) food ingredients, among others. Nutrition professionals can receive up to twelve continuing professional education (CPE) credits for viewing the webinar. The webinar can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

ILSI’s “Low-Calorie Sweeteners, Appetite and Weight Control: What the Science Tells Us”

The proceedings of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) sponsored workshop, “Low-Calorie Sweeteners, Appetite and Weight Control: What the Science Tells Us,” which took place on April 7–8, 2011, in Washington, DC, are now available in a supplement of the *Journal of Nutrition*. These proceedings give an updated perspective on satiety and sweetness, arguing that preference for sweetness varies by individual and therefore desensitization to sweetness by low calorie sweeteners is unlikely. The authors also review the evidence to support use of low-calorie sweeteners in adults and children. The *Journal of Nutrition* supplement is open access, so full articles may be accessed by clicking [here](#).



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