**Warning about artificial sweeteners.**

Most of us may have heard a few years ago that fake sugar (artificial sweeteners) were bad for you (and me).

While we can avoid using those packs of Nutrasweet, Equal, and Sugar Twin which many of us have added to our coffee. A lot of items you, and I, ingest like beverages, instant coffee and tea, gelatins, puddings, and fillings, and dairy products and toppings all have artificial sweeteners.

Amazingly, the FDA has authorized several artificial sweeteners (Aspartame, Acesulfame potassium (Ace-K), and Sucralose), as an additive for use in a variety of foods, but it now appears that ingestion of these fake sugars increases the chance for a stroke, or other heart diseases.

If these artificial sweeteners are now found in many processed foods, the best caution we all must heed is to minimize or avoid processed foods. We are warned to avoid processed foods for other health threatening reasons.

Sadly, living in the modern times, we have many dangers threatening our health. Drink alcohol moderately and do not smoke are the most common advisories we now hear regularly.

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**SOURCES:**

**Diet soda significantly increases your chances of suffering a stroke, new study**

**New study raises concerns about diet sodas**

Wednesday, a new study was published in the BMJ:

Artificial sweeteners and risk of cardiovascular diseases: results from the prospective NutriNet-Sante cohort

The researchers found a potential link between the consumption of artificial sweeteners and heart disease.

The study involved over 100,000 adults in France.

The researchers concluded that "the findings from this large scale prospective cohort study suggest a potential direct association between higher artificial sweetener consumption (especially aspartame, acesulfame potassium, and sucralose) and increased cardiovascular disease risk. Artificial sweeteners are present in thousands of food and beverage brands worldwide, however they remain a controversial topic and are currently being re-evaluated by the European Food Safety Authority, the World Health Organization, and other health agencies."

According to the article, the objective of the study was to research "the associations between artificial sweeteners from all dietary sources (beverages, but also table top sweeteners, dairy products, etc), overall and by molecule (aspartame, acesulfame potassium, and sucralose), and risk of cardiovascular diseases (overall, coronary heart disease, and cerebrovascular disease)."

According to the FDA:

**Aspartame**

Aspartame is approved for use in food as a nutritive sweetener. Aspartame brand names include Nutrasweet, Equal, and Sugar Twin. It does contain calories, but because it is about 200 times sweeter than table sugar, consumers are likely to use much less of it.

FDA approved aspartame in 1981 (46 FR 38283) for uses, under certain conditions, as a tabletop sweetener, in chewing gum, cold breakfast cereals, and dry bases for certain foods (i.e., beverages, instant coffee and tea, gelatins, puddings, and fillings, and dairy products and toppings). In 1983 (48 FR 31376), FDA approved the use of aspartame in carbonated beverages and carbonated beverage syrup bases, and in 1996, FDA approved it for use as a "general purpose sweetener." It is not heat stable and loses its sweetness when heated, so it typically isn't used in baked goods.

Aspartame is one of the most exhaustively studied substances in the human food supply, with more than 100 studies supporting its safety.

FDA scientists have reviewed scientific data regarding the safety of aspartame in food and concluded that it is safe for the general population under certain conditions. However, people with a rare hereditary disease known as phenylketonuria (PKU) have a difficult time metabolizing phenylalanine, a component of aspartame, and should control their intake of phenylalanine from all sources, including aspartame. Labels of aspartame-containing foods and beverages must include a statement that informs individuals with PKU that the product contains phenylalanine.

**Acesulfame potassium (Ace-K)**

Acesulfame potassium is approved for use in food as a non-nutritive sweetener. It is included in the ingredient list on the food label as acesulfame K, acesulfame potassium, or Ace-K. Acesulfame potassium is sold under the brand names Sunett and Sweet One. It is about 200 times sweeter than sugar and is often combined with other sweeteners.

FDA approved acesulfame potassium for use in specific food and beverage categories in 1988 (53 FR 28379), and in 2003 approved it as a general purpose sweetener and flavor enhancer in food, except in meat and poultry, under certain conditions of use. It is heat stable, meaning that it stays sweet even when used at high temperatures during baking, making it suitable as a sugar substitute in baked goods.

Acesulfame potassium is typically used in frozen desserts, candies, beverages, and baked goods. More than 90 studies support its safety.

**Sucralose**

Sucralose is approved for use in food as a non-nutritive sweetener. Sucralose is sold under the brand name Splenda. Sucralose is about 600 times sweeter than sugar.

FDA approved sucralose for use in 15 food categories in 1998 and for use as a general purpose sweetener for foods in 1999, under certain conditions of use. Sucralose is a general purpose sweetener that can be found in a variety of foods including baked goods, beverages, chewing gum, gelatins, and frozen dairy desserts. It is heat stable, meaning that it stays sweet even when used at high temperatures during baking, making it suitable as a sugar substitute in baked goods.

Sucralose has been extensively studied and more than 110 safety studies were reviewed by FDA in approving the use of sucralose as a general purpose sweetener for food.

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