

Facts About Low-Calorie Sweeteners

Handout 3

Given that so many Americans use low-calorie sweeteners and foods that contain them, it is probably natural that misperceptions abound. Here are some of the facts about low-calorie sweeteners and their effects on weight, eating behavior and health.

- **Fact:** Americans face an increasing problem with obesity that foods and beverages sweetened with low-calorie sweeteners may help manage. Research shows that people who use foods and beverages sweetened with low-calorie sweeteners consume fewer calories than those who do not. Experts agree, however, that successful weight management requires more than just calorie reduction; it also involves a three-pronged approach of sensible eating, regular physical activity and behavior management.
- **Fact:** Low-calorie sweeteners do not increase appetite and cravings for sweet foods. Indeed, studies show not only that low-calorie sweeteners do not affect appetite, but they may even help people be more satisfied with eating plans that help them lose weight and keep it off.
- **Fact:** Foods and beverages sweetened with low-calorie sweeteners do not cause disease. These ingredients are some of the most closely studied ingredients in the food supply. A wealth of research confirms they are safe for human consumption.
- **Fact:** Pregnant women can safely use low-calorie sweeteners unless otherwise advised by their physician. All Food and Drug Administration-approved, low-calorie sweeteners are safe for consumption by pregnant women and children. Because diet and caloric intake are important for both of these groups, however, the advice of a physician or a registered dietitian is recommended.
- **Fact:** Low-calorie sweeteners do not cause cancer. Studies show that low-calorie sweeteners do not initiate or promote cancers. Although the level of low-calorie sweetener use has increased in the last several decades, no increase in cancer rates can be attributed to any sweetener.