

Sugar and Sugar Substitutes

Common sugars - table sugar, honey, fructose, and corn syrup. These sweeteners contain calories and carbohydrates that can affect your blood sugar levels. Most sugars contain about 16 calories and 4 grams of carbohydrate per teaspoon. The American Diabetes Association states that sugar sweetened beverages should be avoided and foods with added sugar should be limited.

Agave Nectar-made from the Agave plant, agave nectar is 40 % sweeter than sugar but has a lower glycemic index. It tastes like honey. It has the same calories and carbohydrate as sugar, but it is sweeter so less is used in baking and cooking.

Sugar alcohols- sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol and xylitol are used in many “sugar free foods” such as chewing gum, sugar free candy and sugar free desserts. Sugar alcohols provide about half of the calories and carbohydrates of sugar. Sugar alcohols do not contain alcohol but are digested more slowly. They can cause diarrhea, gas and bloating. Also, many times the sugar free food is higher in fat and calories than one made with sugar so may not help with weight loss.

Artificial sweeteners- Equal, Splenda and Sweet ‘n low are the common calorie free sweeteners. They are approved by the FDA. These products are many times sweeter (200-700) than sugar so just use a small amount. These sweeteners do not affect blood sugar. Read the label about cooking with these products or use the ones especially developed for baking.

Stevia- a natural sweetener from the Stevia leaf, an herb native of South America. It is 250-300 times sweeter than sugar. Stevia has no calories and does not affect the blood sugar. Stevia is approved by FDA and is stable at high heat.

Websites for recipes: www.FBNR.com, www.dlife.com; www.stevia.com;
www.sweetnlow.com www.splenda.com; www.diabeticgourmet.com/recipes