

"How simple it is to see that all the worry in the world cannot control the future. How simple it is to see that we can only be happy now. And that there will never be a time that it is not now."
- **Gerald Jampolsky**

This quote is perfect for right now, given all that we're experiencing. There is so much craziness in the world, but we shouldn't worry about it because most of it is out of our control. The only thing we CAN control is our reaction to what's happening around us. So the lesson here is choose happiness now, because all we have is now. We're not promised tomorrow, so we must cherish and enjoy today. Simply put, live in the now. If you need help doing that, please reach out to me.

Yours in health,

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The Case Against Splenda



For those of you who know me, you know I'm anti-Aspartame, aka NutraSweet, aka Equal. If you'd like to know why please email me and I'll send you some information. But my research has shown me that Splenda, aka Sucralose, is also something to be avoided.

I'm guilty. For years, like probably many of you, I used products containing Splenda (the yellow pack) because I thought they were safe, but I was wrong. I learned that an Italian laboratory discovered it caused leukemia in mice. I was pretty shocked by that study.

Many people think Splenda is "safe" because it comes from sugar. In fact, it's packaging claims: "Made from *sugar so it tastes like sugar.*" There's also a claim that it doesn't cause blood sugar or insulin levels to rise. This doesn't appear to be true, but I'll get to that in a minute. Splenda has been around for a while. My least favorite government agency gave its blessing in 1998 for use as a tabletop sweetener. Then in 1999, they approved it as an all-purpose sweetener. Given what I've learned, I don't actually think it's much better than aspartame (Equal), Sweet N Lo (saccharin) and acesulfame potassium (Sunett or Sweet One). Here's why. Splenda is 600 times sweeter than sugar and it's essentially chemically altered sugar. It's made through a patented process in which chlorine is added into a sugar molecule. Yes, the same toxic chlorine that's pumped into our water supply and swimming pools to help disinfect them is added to sugar to make Splenda. Chlorine is a known carcinogen listed in the OSHA Hazardous Waste Handbook. The inventors of Splenda admit around 15% of the sucralose is absorbed by the body, but they can't guarantee (out of this 15%) how much chlorine stays in the body and how much flushes out. Obviously, the risk varies with quantity, but the bottom line is, it's best to NOT put chlorine from any source into our body.

Possible side effects of Splenda include: gastrointestinal problems (bloating, gas, diarrhea, nausea), skin irritations (rash, hives, redness, itching, swelling), wheezing, cough, runny nose, chest pains, palpitations, anxiety, anger, moods swings, depression and itchy eyes. For those of you familiar with the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), back in June 2013, they downgraded sucralose to a "caution" rating. This means they didn't deem it safe for consumption. The CPSI reviewed the Italian study I mentioned briefly above and found it used a superior protocol in its testing. By labeling Splenda with a "caution" rating, CPSI wants you to try to avoid it until more testing is completed. Back in 2000, one year

after it was approved for general use, Dr. Mercola wrote an article about its dangers that you can access here: (<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2000/12/03/sucralose-dangers.aspx>)

While Splenda is often recommended for use in baking, that process seems to trigger chemical reactions that produce toxic chlorinated compounds....probably because of the added chlorine I mentioned above. Multiple studies have shown that when sucralose reaches 246 degrees Fahrenheit, the heat causes it to break down and release dioxins and other chemicals that are quite dangerous because they can damage cells and potentially increase the risk of cancer.

The makers of Splenda claim it's good for diabetics because it doesn't increase blood sugar levels. That seems to be untrue. A 2013 published in the journal *Diabetes Care* revealed that Splenda actually elicits a diabetes-promoting effect in people who consume it. Researchers from the *Center for Human Nutrition* at the *Washington University School of Medicine* in St. Louis, Missouri made this discovery after evaluating the metabolic effects of Splenda consumption on a small group of 17 human participants, all of whom were obese and didn't use artificial sweeteners. Each participant was given either Splenda or control water 10 minutes before undergoing a five-hour glucose tolerance test. When the trial ended, the team discovered that Splenda consumption caused noticeable changes in insulin production, circulating insulin levels and overall sensitivity to insulin. It led to a 20% SPIKE in insulin levels, which is the complete opposite of what the makers and advertisements claimed.

In addition to increasing blood sugar levels, a study published in the *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health Part A* provided evidence that Splenda also reduces the number of "good" bacteria in the intestines by 50% and it also increases the pH level in the intestines. Many doctors believe a healthy gut is the key to wellness, which seems to indicate that consumption of Splenda could adversely impact your health.. A study done by Duke University showed a link between Splenda use and weight gain. Isn't that why people use artificial sweeteners: to avoid gaining weight?

I wish we could all give up sugar and its substitutes, but that's probably not realistic. Sugar is incredibly addictive...much like heroin. If you try to cut back, you crave it more and can end up bingeing, much like overdosing. So instead of asking you to give up sugar and its substitutes, I'm going to give you a couple safer alternatives. Truvia is NOT one of them. This sweetener comes from rebiana, a compound found in the leaves of the Stevia shrub. It claims to be a "natural sweetener", but was developed by Coca Cola and Cargill and sweetened with erythritol. It doesn't have any calories, but I found a study done by a 12-year old and confirmed by a team at Drexel University, that Truvia was TOXIC to fruit flies. In that same study, fruit flies given food laced with Pure Via, another sweetener from the Stevia plant, didn't see their lifespan altered.

So what's a person to do? Here are couple sweeteners I can recommend.

Agave Nectar - This comes from the agave plant, a relative of the cactus. It's healthier than sugar and has the same number of calories. It just doesn't spike blood sugar levels like sugar.

Stevia - This comes from the leaves of the South American shrub *Stevia rebaudiana* and is about 25-30 times sweeter than sugar, For a DECADE, stevia as a natural sweetener was suppressed by the FDA. Fortunately, it went pretty mainstream in 2008 and has actually been found to contain some antioxidants that may help prevent DNA damage. Another piece of good news about stevia is that it has no impact on blood sugar levels. A product made from stevia is called Pure Via. One packet does contain a small amount of sugar (1/2 teaspoon), which has its own issues. It's also about 300 times sweeter than sugar, so if you cook/bake with it, reduce the amount you use by half when used in place of sugar. I couldn't find any evidence of side effects from using any form of stevia. Although some brands leave a bitter aftertaste.

Honey – Most people probably have this in their kitchen, but I'm sure it didn't cross your mind to use it as a sweetener....other than in tea. It's a great all-around natural sweetener best used local and RAW, as it can help fight seasonal allergies and is much better for you than the processed honey available in the grocery store. Honey has a lot of great uses as well as antioxidants. But the problem is, it packs A LOT of calories and can raise blood sugar levels.

Xylitol – Along with stevia, this is my personal favorite. It has 33% fewer calories than sugar and has a low glycemic index, which indicates it doesn't have much impact on blood sugar levels. This is good news for diabetics. It was actually discovered back in the 19th century by chemists in Germany and France. It can improve the health of gums and teeth, which is why it's an ingredient in many toothpastes. It also has antibacterial properties and helps make the body more alkaline, which helps prevent disease. I use a nasal spray that contains xylitol and I haven't had a sinus infection in years. It also slightly slows down the digestive process, which can help you feel full longer and therefore, help with weight loss. Honestly, its benefits are too numerous to list here. But reach out to me if you'd like to learn more.

The bottom line is this: moderation is the key to pretty much everything, but try to limit your consumption of sugar and its substitutes. If you're going to consume something sweet, please consider using some of the alternatives I've mentioned above, rather than Splenda, to curb your exposure to unhealthy and toxic chemicals.

Have a wonderful month.