

Sweet News of Weight Loss: Artificial Sweeteners Work

By ACSH Staff — October 20, 2015

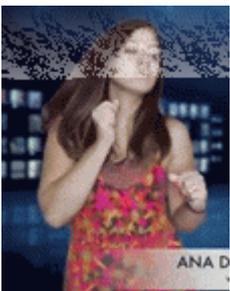


Here's the skinny on artificial sweeteners:

The science says "low-energy sweeteners" (LES), consumed in place of real sugar, can be beneficial to health and weight loss.

A new meta-analysis published in the *International Journal of Obesity* concluded that body weight and glycemic control both benefit when sugary-sweetened beverages like soda or juice are replaced with artificially-sweetened beverages. That's despite skeptics' claims that LES promote weight gain and are associated with obesity.

And the best part is that we at the American Council on Science and Health have been saying this for years. Cue our happy dance.



Previous critical studies on this topic have suggested artificial sweeteners produce a counterintuitive effect on body weight by provoking obesity, which can lead to diabetes and cardiovascular issues. But those so-called studies have failed to prove a causal relationship. In fact, low- or no-calorie sweeteners were also acknowledged in the [National Weight Control Registry](#) ^[1] as an important factor in weight-loss maintenance. And for good reason.

Artificially-sweetened beverages do a good job at curbing weight gain, by providing the body with the sweetness craved, sans the added calories. Last year, a [study](#) ^[2] published in the journal *Obesity* also refuted the bizarre theory that artificial sweeteners promote weight gain. When compared with water the be-all and end-all for healthy hydration researchers found that those who drank artificially sweetened beverages lost more weight than those drinking water alone. The

results were statistically significant.

The most recent review included animal studies in addition to randomized controlled trials. The researchers reported that in most animal studies, exposure to low energy sweeteners decreased body weight, or had a "negligible" effect. In the human randomized controlled trials the findings showed LES led to relatively reduced weight.

The study does not discuss the different types of low calorie sweeteners, though a few caveats must be noted.

First, one of the sweeteners, aspartame, is not safe for those with phenylketonuria, a birth defect that causes an amino acid called phenylalanine (which is in aspartame) to build up in the body. The condition is rare but serious.

Second, when it comes to artificially-sweetened food, just because there is no real sugar it is not an invitation for carte blanche grazing. As Dr. Ruth Kava, a nutrition expert at the American Council on Science and Health, has pointed out in the past, "If you substitute a diet soda for a sugar soda, you save 100 calories, but if you eat 15 sugar-free cookies [which have calories] instead of two regular cookies, you may not be helping yourself at all."

The council has written extensively on the safety and benefits of artificial sweeteners. You can read more articles [here](#) [3], and watch our in-depth video on aspartame [here](#). [4]

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