



The New Jersey Police Chief

The Official Publication of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police

Vol. 19, No. 3 • March 2013

POLICE CHIEFS IN-SERVICE SEMINAR: *A Leadership Retreat for Senior Commanders*

September 11-13, 2013

The Seaview Resort

Galloway, New Jersey

See page 8 for more information

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- From the Desk of the President
- 101st Annual Training Conference Registration Information
- Top 15 Cases of 2012 for Municipal Courts

The Scoop on Artificial Sweeteners

By Matt Brzycki, Assistant Director of Campus Recreation, Fitness, Princeton University

Many people consume artificial sweeteners with little or no thought; other people avoid artificial sweeteners like the plague. Regardless of your position, it's important to have a good understanding of artificial sweeteners so that you can make informed decisions.

Essentially, artificial sweeteners are synthetic substitutes for regular sugar (sucrose). Artificial sweeteners are found in thousands of sugar-free, sugarless, diet, lite (or light) and low-calorie products. This includes soda, candy, gum, ice cream, yogurt, baked goods and a variety of canned foods.

At the present time, seven artificial sweeteners are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in the United States. Those seven are (brand names in parentheses) acesulfame K (Sweet One), aspartame (Equal and NutraSweet), Luo Han Guo extract, neotame, saccharin (Sweet 'N Low), stevia (Truvia) and sucralose (Splenda).

Artificial sweeteners are much sweeter than sugar. Neotame, for example, is anywhere from 7,000 to 13,000 times sweeter. But some artificial sweeteners leave a funny aftertaste. Actually, it's not so funny. Many consumers point out that one or two artificial sweeteners have a bitter aftertaste. And it lingers.

Most artificial sweeteners have no calories which can be advantageous for those who want to lose weight. (Aspartame—the lone exception and most popular artificial sweetener—has four calories per gram, the same as sugar and other carbohydrates). Look at it this way: The average non-diet soda has about 100 calories per eight ounces. Drinking one 12-ounce can of non-diet soda on a daily basis translates into about 54,750 calories in a year. In theory, then, substituting a diet soda for the non-diet soda would mean a weight loss of about 15.6 pounds (provided that there's no change in caloric intake and caloric output).

There are two more advantages of using artificial sweeteners in place of sugar. First, unlike sugar, artificial sweeteners generally don't raise blood sugar which is an enormous boon for diabetics. Also, unlike sugar, artificial sweeteners don't contribute to tooth decay.

The big question on many people's minds, of course, is "Are they safe?" Most of the fears about artificial sweeteners can be traced back to saccharin, the first artificial sweetener that was approved for use in foods and beverages. In 1977, the FDA proposed a ban on saccharin because studies showed that it produced bladder cancer in laboratory rats. Congress issued an 18-month moratorium on the ban but required products to carry a warning label. It was later determined that studies of animals weren't applicable to humans. In 2000, Congress removed the requirement for a warning label.

The fact of the matter is that artificial sweeteners have been tested by the FDA and determined to be safe at levels that are within the acceptable daily intake (ADI). The ADI is the amount that's considered safe for people to consume on a daily basis over the course of their lifetime without experiencing adverse effects. In short, there's no evidence that *any* of the artificial sweeteners that have been approved by the FDA increase the risk of cancer in humans.

Bottom line: Based on the current scientific evidence, artificial sweeteners are a safe and effective substitute for sugar.

Matt Brzycki is the Assistant Director of Campus Recreation, Fitness at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. A former Marine Drill Instructor, he has authored, co-authored and edited 17 books including his latest, the fourth edition of A Practical Approach to Strength Training.