

## ALTERNATIVE SUGARS

# Sucralose



Elaine Gardner, British Dietetic Association (BDA) Spokesperson, discusses the sugar content in sucralose and provides related oral health advice.



## Sucralose

**What is it?** Sucralose is an artificial sweetener. Although the name sucralose ends in -ose, it is not a sugar like fructose or sucrose, so the name is rather misleading. It is a modified form of ordinary sugar (sucrose). It is also known under the E number E955.

**Found in?** It is commonly found in granular, liquid or mini-tablet form and sold under the trade name of 'Splenda' or as the individual yellow packets of Canderel (not other versions of Canderel as they contain different sweeteners).

Sucralose-based products are in a broad range of lower-calorie foods, including table top sweeteners, fizzy drinks, chewing gum, baking mixes, breakfast cereals and salad dressings.

**Effect on general health:** Sucralose itself contains no calories but because it is very sweet (approximately 600 times as sweet as sugar), sucralose in the granulated format is often mixed with other sweetening ingredients such as maltodextrin. This dilutes its intense sweetness and provides volume and texture. These, however, are not calorie-free, so a teaspoon contains about 2-4 calories. This is about 20% of the calories of sugar which the granulated product is intended to replace.

The claim that 'sucralose has less of an impact on blood glucose than sugar' has been validated by the European Food Safety Authority.<sup>1</sup>

**Oral health impact:** Sucralose has no effect on tooth decay (again validated by EFSA<sup>1</sup>).

Any other sweetening ingredients included in the sucralose-based table top sweeteners are not harmful to teeth. Sucralose is commonly found in oral health products, such as chewing gum.

**Advice for patients:** Sucralose is one of many artificial sweeteners that can be used as an alternative to sugar. These can be useful for weight reduction and for helping diabetics reduce their sugar intakes. Sucralose is not cariogenic, but, as always, good oral hygiene should be maintained.

As part of a healthy diet, the population as a whole could also be encouraged to consider consuming fewer 'sweet snacks and drinks', rather than simply replacing those containing sugar with those containing artificial sweeteners.

### Further reading

1. European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Scientific Opinion on the substantiation of health claims related to the sugar replacers xylitol, sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomalt, erythritol, D-tagatose, isomaltulose, sucralose and polydextrose and maintenance of tooth mineralisation by decreasing tooth demineralisation and reduction of post-prandial glycaemic responses pursuant to Article 13(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006. *EFSA J* 2011; **9**: 2076. Available from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2011.2076/epdf> (accessed September 2017).



Find out more about the British Dietetic Association at: [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)

*This concludes our series on sugar alternatives – with many thanks to Elaine Gardner.*

## Honours, awards, appointments

### BDA board election results

The successful candidates for the BDA Principal Executive Committee (PEC) elections for the 2018-20 triennium are as follows:

**Eastern:** Jason Stokes

**North West:** John Edwards

**Wales:** Tim Harker

**West Midlands:** Eddie Crouch

**UK-wide:** Len D'Cruz

All of these candidates were due to take up their mandate on 1 January 2018 alongside the other ten sitting members.

### New President

Professor Liz Kay MBE has been inaugurated as the new President of the Oral Health Foundation. Professor Kay will take on the role for a full two-year term and combine it with her role as Foundation Dean of Peninsula Dental School in Plymouth. Outgoing President Janet Goodwin will remain on the board of Trustees for two further years.

### Young Achiever Award

Dentist Niall Mc Goldrick was awarded the Young Achiever Award at the Scottish Health Awards 2017 on 3 November. These awards recognise the hard work of healthcare staff from across the NHS workplace in Scotland. Dr Mc Goldrick got the honours in a category for an individual of 30 years or younger who 'has demonstrated outstanding achievement as part of their working life... which has shown initiative, drive and excellent judgement in their work to achieve exceptional results'. The judges were particularly impressed with the work he has done as one of the main drivers behind charity Let's Talk About Mouth Cancer; and in leading teams of volunteer dental students to provide free urgent dental care to impoverished areas of Peru.