

Smart swaps as part of a balanced diet

The role of low calorie sweeteners



Smart swaps involve making small and manageable changes to daily eating and drinking habits by replacing a typical food or drink with a lower calorie option.

By substituting sugar with low calorie sweeteners, it is possible to lower the energy density in foods and drinks. This means people can continue to enjoy sweet taste while reducing or managing their daily calorie intake and lose or maintain a healthy weight¹.

Research indicates that people's preference for sweetness is something that we are born with². However, this innate propensity for sweet taste does not mean having to give up the tastes we enjoy in order to maintain a healthy weight. Instead, by paying closer attention to how we manage our preference for sweetness through smart swaps, we can balance better the number of calories consumed with the number of calories burned off.

Low calorie sweeteners can help eliminate or substantially reduce the calories in some foods and drinks. They offer an easy method for reducing calories while maintaining the palatability of the diet. For example, a regular 330ml can of soft drink contains around 140 calories. By switching to a diet or light version, the same quantity of soft drink contains less than 1 calorie.

When shopping for the family, making healthy choices can be simple through smart swaps. Food labels often show a 'guideline daily amount' (GDA), which lets us know how much sugar is in the food compared with the total amount that adults should have in a day³. So, when food shopping, compare labels and switch to an item that is marked lower in sugar or even sugar-free.

Complete diet makeovers can be overwhelming. But, by choosing to make small, simple changes, the transition to healthy eating will be more manageable and sustainable over the long term⁴. Simple food swaps will save calories and help with weight management.

Smart swaps can help you to:



Limit your sugar intake while maintaining the sweet taste in foods and drinks



Reduce the total amount of calories in your diet



Lose or maintain your body weight in a more effective way



Manage your blood glucose levels

Smart swaps can cut sugar, fat and calories from the diet by swapping everyday food and drinks for lower-fat or sugar-free alternatives.



A regular 330ml can of soft drink contains around 140 calories, but by switching to a diet or light version, the same quantity of soft drink contains less than 1 calorie.



A 100g serving of raspberry jelly contains 80 calories when made with sugar, or less than 10 calories when made with low-calorie sweeteners.



Enjoying a cup of coffee each day has its health benefits, but many flavoured coffee drinks contain 200 calories or more. Substituting sugar with low-calorie sweeteners can help reduce calorie intake.

Reducing energy intake is important in achieving weight loss. That is why encouraging people to make simple substitutions from sugar-sweetened products to ones made with low-calorie sweeteners can be an effective weight management approach. In 2016, the International Journal of Obesity published one of the most thorough systematic reviews and meta-analyses on low-calorie sweeteners' consumption and the reduction of energy intake and body weight⁵. A considerable weight of evidence was found in favour of the consumption of low-calorie sweeteners as helpful in reducing relative energy intake and body weight.

Furthermore, a review paper by Raben and Richelsen⁶ concludes that low-calorie sweeteners can be a helpful tool to reduce energy intake and body weight, and thereby risk for diabetes and cardiovascular diseases (CVD). Considering the challenge of increasing rates of obesity and diabetes, smart swaps with low-calorie sweetened foods and drinks can provide an important alternative to caloric sweeteners.

Achieving a 'get healthy' resolution can be easy and does not have to involve an outlay of money or time. By putting in place some simple smart swaps everyday, such as using low-calorie sweeteners in foods and drinks, we can enjoy sweet taste without increasing overall calorie intake.

Low-calorie sweetened options can be used as part of a healthy, balanced diet along with regular exercise to help you reduce your daily calorie count!



Active lifestyle



Healthy, balanced diet



Low-calorie sweeteners

References

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