

Consumption of sugar substitutes assists in long-term weight control

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A new study published in the *International Journal of Obesity* reports that consumption of sugar-free beverages sweetened with low-calorie sweeteners increases dietary restraint, a key aspect of successful weight maintenance.

Researchers analyzed calorie, protein, carbohydrate, fat and beverage intake, as well as the dietary restraint of over 300 individuals. The researchers concluded, "Our findings...suggest that the use of artificially sweetened beverages may be an important weight control strategy among WLM [[weight loss](#) maintainers]."

The researchers also stated, "The current study suggests that WLM use more dietary strategies to accomplish their WLM, including greater restriction of fat intake, use of fat and sugar modified foods, reduced consumption of caloric beverages and increased consumption of artificially sweetened beverages."

This study builds upon the findings from a 2002 study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* which found consumers of sugar substitutes had significantly greater weight loss compared with participants who did not consume sugar substitutes.

According to Dr. Adam Drewnowski, director, Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington, "Low-calorie sweeteners and reduced-calorie products are not magic bullets, which means using these products will not result in automatic weight loss. Instead, people looking

to lose or maintain weight, can use low-calorie sweeteners in addition to other tools (such as portion control, exercise, etc.) to help manage their calories."

Dr. Drewnowski co-authored a recent research review of low-calorie sweeteners, published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, which found that low-calorie sweeteners and the products that contain them can help people reduce their calorie intake and were associated with modest weight loss.

More than 194 million Americans are consuming low and reduced calorie foods and beverages, according to the Calorie Control Council's most recent national consumer survey. The Council, a non-profit trade association, has noted that this number will likely continue to rise as more consumers begin to understand that "calories count" for weight loss and weight maintenance.

More information: Phelan, S et al. Use of artificial sweeteners and fat-modified foods in weight loss maintainers and always-normal weight individuals. [International Journal of Obesity](#) advance online publication 28 July 2009; [doi: 10.1038/ijo.2009.147](#)

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