

FDA approves new artificial sweetener

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Advantame can be used to sweeten coffee, tea and as an ingredient in cooking.

(HealthDay)—A new sugar substitute called advantame was approved on Monday by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The sixth [artificial sweetener](#) to receive the agency's blessing, advantame can be used in [baked goods](#), soft drinks and other non-alcoholic beverages, chewing gum, candies, frostings, frozen desserts, gelatins and puddings, jams and jellies, processed fruits and fruit juices, toppings and syrups.

Advantame is a white powder that dissolves in water and remains stable even at higher temperatures, the FDA said in a news release. It can be used as both a tabletop sweetener and as an ingredient in cooking.

Sugar substitutes add few or no calories to foods, and generally do not raise [blood sugar levels](#), the agency noted.

"Sugar substitutes are called 'high-intensity' because small amounts pack a large punch when it comes to sweetness," Captain Andrew Zajac, of

the U.S. Public Health Service and director of the FDA's division of petition review, explained in the news release.

The agency's approval of advantame is based on the findings of 37 animal and human studies submitted by the maker of the new sugar substitute.

Advantame is chemically similar to [aspartame](#) (Equal), and certain people should avoid or limit their use of aspartame, the FDA noted. These people have a genetic disorder called phenylketonuria (PKU), which makes it difficult for them to metabolize phenylalanine, a component of both aspartame and advantame. Food with aspartame must include label information warning people with PKU about the presence of phenylalanine.

The FDA evaluated whether advantame should also carry alerts for people with PKU. Because advantame is much sweeter than aspartame, only a small amount is needed to achieve the same level of sweetness. As a result, foods that contain advantame do not need to include alerts for people with PKU, the FDA said.

The last high-intensity sweetener approved by the FDA was Neotame (brand name Newtame) in 2002. The other four sweeteners used in the United States are saccharin (Sweet'N Low), aspartame (Equal), acesulfame potassium (Sweet One), and sucralose (Splenda). Advantame does not yet have a brand name.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [artificial sweeteners](#).

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