

Evidence shows low energy sweeteners help reduce energy intake and body weight

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Use of low energy sweeteners (LES) in place of sugar, in children and adults, leads to reduced calorie intake and body weight – and possibly also when comparing LES beverages to water – according to a review led by researchers at the University of Bristol published in the *International Journal of Obesity* today.

For the first time, all available science was integrated into a single review to evaluate the real impact of LES, such as saccharin, aspartame, sucralose and stevia, on [energy](#) intake (EI) and [body weight](#) (BW) over the short- and long-term. A considerable weight of evidence confirmed that consuming LES instead of sugar helps reduce relative energy intake and body weight.

Lead author Professor Peter Rogers from the University of Bristol said: "We believe that we should shift the question from whether LES are 'good' or 'bad,' and rather focus on how they should be best used in practice to help in the achievement of specific public health goals, such as the reduction of intakes of free sugars and energy."

The authors conducted systematic reviews of relevant studies in animals and humans consuming LES in a non-restricted diet. In total, 12 human prospective cohort studies, 228 comparisons in human intervention studies (short and long-term) and 90 animal studies were examined.

Managing energy balance (that is, energy intake vs. energy expenditure) well results in a steady body weight. On the contrary, eating an excessive

amount of food causes an increase in body weight as this extra energy is stored in the body as adipose tissue (fat). Low energy sweeteners were developed for consumers looking for ways to reduce their sugar and [energy intake](#).

The comparison between LES beverages and water is important because it shows that LES do not increase appetite. If anything, the evidence suggests that LES beverages reduced weight more than water. One reason for this may be that switching from sugar-sweetened drinks to those with LES may be an easier and more acceptable dietary change to make than switching to water.

More information: P J Rogers et al. Does low-energy sweetener consumption affect energy intake and body weight? A systematic review, including meta-analyses, of the evidence from human and animal studies, *International Journal of Obesity* (2015). [DOI: 10.1038/ijo.2015.177](#)

Provided by University of Bristol

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