

PepsiCo brings back aspartame as diet cola sales fizzle

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PepsiCo said Monday it is putting aspartame back into some diet beverages in the United States, just a year after pulling the artificial sweetener from its products over consumer concerns about safety.

"Consumers want choice in diet colas, so we're refreshing our US lineup to provide three options that meet differing needs and taste preferences," a PepsiCo spokeswoman, Gina Anderson, said in an email to AFP.

The move comes as PepsiCo struggles with fizzling diet-cola sales.

Diet Pepsi's sales volume fell 5.8 percent in 2015 and dropped roughly 11 percent at retail during the first quarter of 2016, according to data from Beverage Digest cited by Bloomberg News.

The US beverages and snacks giant said in April 2015 it would replace aspartame-sweetened Diet Pepsi with versions sweetened with a blend of sucralose, commonly known as Splenda, and acesulfame potassium in August.

At the time, PepsiCo said that consumers wanted aspartame-free drinks. The trend came amid studies that linked aspartame to cancer.

But now American [consumers](#) appeared willing to mix up their artificial sweeteners, according to the company.

PepsiCo said it will use [aspartame](#) in its reintroduction later this year of

Diet Pepsi Classic Sweetener Blend and PepsiMAX as PepsiZeroSugar.

Diet Pepsi, its main [diet](#) cola brand in the US, will remain sweetened with sucralose and Ace-K, it said.

Aspartame and sucralose are approved for human consumption by the US Food and Drug Administration.

In late 2014, Coca-Cola launched Coca-Cola Life, its first reduced-calorie soft drink sweetened with cane sugar and stevia leaf extract, a natural herbal [sweetener](#).

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