

Possible bittersweet effects of stevia uncovered by researchers

December 7 2020



Stevia rebaudiana. Credit: public domain

According to a new study by Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) researchers, the natural sweetener stevia may lead to a gut microbial imbalance. The findings were just published in *Molecules*, a

leading international peer-reviewed journal of chemistry.

Stevia is a natural low-calorie sweetener that is growing in popularity in food and beverage products and is generally considered safe. However, emerging [scientific evidence](#) has implicated the sweetener in gut microbial imbalance, which can lead to a variety of gastrointestinal health issues.

According to the new study, stevia may disrupt communications between different bacteria in the gut microbiome. While the team found that stevia inhibited these pathways, it did not kill off the bacteria.

"This is an initial study that indicates that more research is warranted before the [food industry](#) replaces sugar and [artificial sweeteners](#) with stevia and its extracts," says lead researcher Dr. Karina Golberg, of the BGU Avram and Stella Goldstein-Goren Department of Biotechnology Engineering.

More information: Victor Markus et al, Anti-Quorum Sensing Activity of Stevia Extract, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A and Their Aglycon Steviol, *Molecules* (2020). [DOI: 10.3390/molecules25225480](https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules25225480)

Provided by American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Citation: Possible bittersweet effects of stevia uncovered by researchers (2020, December 7) retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-12-bittersweet-effects-stevia-uncovered.html>

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