



You asked
about
sweeteners



Sweeteners give foods a special flavor that is easy to love. In fact, babies are born with a “sweet tooth”! Certain sweeteners also add texture, body and other characteristics to food. Read on for information on the natural sugars and added sweeteners in DANNON® yogurts.

Sugars explained

When people use the word “sugar,” they usually mean table sugar, or sucrose. The world of sugars, however, includes many different types of sugar. Sugars are found in fruits, milk and milk products, many vegetables and most grain products. For example, fructose is sugar found naturally in fruit and lactose is the sugar found naturally in milk. Sugars are forms of carbohydrate.

In the body...

Sugars, like all carbohydrates, are a source of energy for the body. After digestion, most sugars are converted into glucose, which travels to the body’s cells for immediate energy or is stored for future energy needs. All sugars contain about four calories per gram. Each teaspoon of table sugar — a combination of glucose and fructose — provides 16 calories of energy.



In foods...

Sugars and caloric sweeteners play important roles when added to foods. They thicken and preserve jams and jellies. They add tenderness and volume to cakes and cookies. Sugars help speed the action of yeast in breads and other baked items, and slow down the growth of undesirable bacteria.



On the label...

Food product labels can tell you how much sugar is in a particular food, and also what types of sweeteners are added to the product.

- For the total amount of carbohydrate and sugars, look at the Nutrition Facts panel.
- For types of sweeteners added, look at the ingredient list.

Some of the common caloric sweeteners as ingredients

<i>brown sugar</i>	<i>invert sugar</i>
<i>corn sweetener</i>	<i>lactose</i>
<i>corn syrup</i>	<i>maltose</i>
<i>dextrose</i>	<i>malt syrup</i>
<i>evaporated cane juice</i>	<i>molasses</i>
<i>fructose, fructose syrup</i>	<i>raw sugar</i>
<i>fruit juice concentrate</i>	<i>sucrose</i>
<i>glucose</i>	<i>sugar</i>
<i>high-fructose corn syrup</i>	<i>syrup</i>
<i>honey</i>	

Low calorie and no calorie sweeteners explained

Low calorie sweeteners add sweetness to foods but are not considered sugars. Ounce for ounce, some have the same number of calories as sugar. Because they are so sweet, they can be added to food in an extremely small amount that contributes almost no calories. Other sweeteners have no calories. Low calorie sweeteners do not significantly raise insulin or blood glucose levels.

Aspartame is made from aspartic acid and phenylalanine, two amino acids (protein building blocks). It is a popular sweetener in reduced calorie yogurts. Aspartame is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as safe to use for the general population, as well as for people with diabetes. People with the hereditary disease phenylketonuria (PKU), should not use aspartame because their body cannot process phenylalanine.

Sucralose, marketed under the brand name SPLENDA®, is used in extremely small amounts to add sweetness with no calories.

Xylitol, *mannitol*, *isomalt*, *lactitol*, *erythritol*, and *sorbitol* are called sugar alcohols because of their chemical structure. They do not actually contain alcohol.

Label claims

These claims may appear on foods that contain low calorie sweeteners:

"Sugar free" or "sugarless" — less than 0.5 grams of sugar per labeled serving size and per reference amount that typically is consumed (called Reference Amount Customarily Consumed, or RACC).

"Reduced sugar" or "less sugar" — 25% less sugar per serving, compared to the original food or to a reference food.

"No added sugar" — Sugar (or ingredient that contains any form of added sugar) is not added during processing or packaging to sweeten the food. In addition, the sugar content is not increased above the amount present in the ingredients by some means (such as the use of enzymes).





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Planning your diet

MyPyramid was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help Americans plan a healthy diet. By using MyPyramid, you can make smart food choices, get the most nutrition in the calories you eat, and find a balance between food and physical activity.

Four of the six food groups in MyPyramid — grains, vegetables, fruits and milk — contain natural sugars. The foods in these groups, along with the other two groups, are rich in important nutrients for health. MyPyramid also includes added sugars as part of “discretionary calorie”, an extra calorie allowance in addition to the basic foods in MyPyramid.

Sugars and your health

True or false? Sugar is the cause of obesity, diabetes, and hyperactivity in children.

False. Research has not supported a direct link between sugars and obesity or other chronic conditions or with behavioral disorders. However, caloric sweeteners do increase the risk of dental caries, and diets high in added sugars displace important nutrients. Also, sweetened beverages may promote weight gain because liquid energy may be less filling /satisfying.

If you have diabetes...

One of the major goals in managing diabetes is to maintain a normal blood sugar level. To accomplish this, the American Diabetes Association recommends that you regulate the total amount of carbohydrate you eat. Carbohydrate comes from foods that naturally contain carbohydrates and also from added sweeteners.

Whether you use MyPyramid, Exchange Lists, or Carbohydrate Counting to plan your balanced diet, you can enjoy a variety of favorite foods and successfully manage your blood sugar. Yogurt is part of the milk group of MyPyramid. Plain and other nonnutritive sweetened yogurts are part of the Milk List in the Exchange Lists.

Always work with a registered dietitian or physician for specific dietary guidance.



Sweeteners in DANNON yogurts

DANNON yogurts contain different amounts of naturally occurring and added sweeteners to please a wide variety of consumer taste preferences. Sugars occur naturally in milk and fruit, and some sugars are added to enhance the flavor of our yogurts. Many products are now made with low calorie or no calorie sweeteners to reduce calories. DANNON yogurts (6 oz) are a great choice for part of a nutritious meal, snack or treat.

REFERENCES:

American Diabetes Association, Making Healthy Food Choices, www.diabetes.org.

International Food Information Council, Background on Sugars & Low-Calorie Sweeteners, May 2004, www.ific.org.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Steps to a Healthier You, www.mypyramid.gov.

Position of the American Dietetic Association: Use of Nutritive and Nonnutritive Sweeteners, 2004.



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