



\*\* This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/food-science-artificial-sweeteners>

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### **K-State food scientist: Artificial sweeteners are safe – within reason**

FDA's oversight keeps U.S. foods safe for consumers

*By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service*

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Artificial sweeteners – including aspartame, sucralose and others – likely are getting a bad rap.

Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee notes that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration lists aspartame as “possibly carcinogenic to humans,” though that product has never been linked to cancer.

Plus, Blakeslee notes, the level of aspartame that must be consumed to reach even the Acceptable Daily Intake (known as ADI) approved by the FDA is very high.

“Let’s put this into perspective,” Blakeslee said. “A person weighing 132 pounds (60 kg) would have to consume about 75 packets of aspartame every day to reach the Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) of 50 milligrams per kilogram of body weight per day. Or, if you are drinking soda that contains aspartame, a person who weighs 154 pounds would have to drink 9-14 cans each day, just to reach the acceptable intake level.”

The FDA’s level of use must be followed by manufacturers that include aspartame or other artificial sweeteners in their foods.

“Too much of any food or ingredient can be a problem (to health),” Blakeslee said. “So a person would have to consume very large amounts of aspartame for that product to become a problem.”

Blakeslee notes that artificial sweeteners are often a better option for people with certain health conditions, such as diabetes. She said artificial sweeteners allow those people to enjoy their favorite sweet treats without the worry of raising their blood glucose level.

“Aspartame is about 200 times sweeter than sugar,” she said. “Aspartame is typically not used in baked goods because it is not heat stable. It can be found in foods such as chewing gum, cold breakfast cereals and dry mixes, such as beverages, powders, pudding or gelatin.”

For some, however, aspartame must be avoided. Blakeslee said products containing aspartame must include a warning on their label for those with phenylketonuria (PKU), a rare genetic disorder in which the body cannot break down phenylalanine.

More food safety tips are available online from K-State's [Rapid Response Center for Food Science](#). Blakeslee publishes a monthly newsletter, called [You Asked It!](#), with timely tips for safe food in and out of the home.

More information is also available at [local extension offices in Kansas](#).

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**FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS:** Links used in this article  
Rapid Response Center for Food Science, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu>

You Asked It! food safety newsletter, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension statewide locations, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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