

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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January 17, 2008

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**Another Sugar Replacer**

A few weeks ago there was a large article in this paper for a new sugar replacer, Clabber Girl Sugar Replacer for Baking. After reading it I was curious, so I went looking. What is in it, and how does it work? Where can I get it? Here's what I found out.

First, we can't buy it here in Florida yet, but we can mail order it. Check out the Clabber Girl web site <[www.clabbergirl.com](http://www.clabbergirl.com)> if you want to try it. Or call a friend in Texas, Missouri or Pennsylvania to look for it for you there, where it is in grocery stores.

Next, what is in it? There are six ingredients. Three are sugar alcohols, two are calorie-free sweeteners, and the last is basically a filler or bulking agent. One advantage of them all is that they do not break down when they are heated. So you can bake or cook with them and still have a sweet pie or muffin coming out of the oven.

The other big advantage is that, with the filler included, this product takes up as much space in the recipe as regular sugar does. So unlike the smaller cake or fewer cookies from the same recipe made with other low calorie sweeteners, cakes made with this product will be full size. You'll get the whole several dozen cookies, not half a recipe's worth.

Sugar alcohols occur naturally in fruits and some vegetables. They are not alcoholic and won't cause problems associated with alcohol. They have been used in low calorie and diabetic candies and chewing gums for a long time. More recently they have been used in many other foods. They have about half as many calories as sugar does. Some of them give food a minty, cool flavor. The main problem with most sugar alcohols is that, if we eat enough of them, they give us diarrhea! The three sugar

alcohols in this sugar replacer are sorbitol, isomalt and erythritol. Erythritol is very similar to vitamin C.

The artificial sweeteners are acesulfame potassium, or Ace K, and Neotame. Ace K is about 200 times sweeter than sugar. It is sold directly as Sunett or Sweet One, and has been approved for use in foods in the US since 1988. Because a lot of people can taste the potassium (the K) with a bitter, almost metallic flavor, Ace K is mostly used in a mixture with other sweeteners. Since it is so sweet not much is needed to provide sweetness.

Neotame, the second artificial sweetener, is even more sweet. It is 8000 times as sweet as sugar, so very, very little is needed to make a recipe taste good. Neotame is very like its cousin aspartame, but has a cleaner sweet taste. Some people worry about the tiny bit of alcohol released when we digest neotame, but it's really not a risk. We'd have to drink 200 cups or 12 ½ gallons of a soda sweetened with Neotame to get as much as there is naturally in one cup of tomato juice!

Because such a tiny amount of the sweeteners are needed to replace the taste of sugar, the sugar replacer fills up the space with polydextrose. This is made from sugar or starch, but acts like a dietary fiber. We don't digest most of it, so it only gives us one quarter as many calories as sugar. This is the ingredient that makes the muffins be full-sized, and the cookie recipe make as many as usual.

Here's a recipe for a healthy cookie, for those who are still dreaming of sweet Christmas goodies. But this one is higher in fiber and lower in fat. And running the oven will warm up the house on a cool evening. If you don't tell the kids what's in them, they won't know they are eating their vegetables!

#### Carrot-Raisin Bars

1/3 cup sugar

1/3 cup trans-free margarine

1 large egg

1 tsp vanilla

1/4 cup water

½ cup whole wheat flour

1/4 cup all purpose flour  
3/4 tsp ground cinnamon  
1/2 cup quick-cooking rolled oats  
1/4 cup raisins

1 tsp baking powder  
1/4 tsp salt  
1/2 cup finely shredded carrots

Lightly grease 8 x 8 inch baking pan. Preheat oven to 350° F. Beat sugar and margarine until well blended, about 2 minutes. Add egg and vanilla, beat well. Add water, beat again. Combine flours, oats, cinnamon, salt and baking powder, mix into egg mixture. Mix in oats, raisins and carrot. Spread in pan, bake about 25 minutes, until toothpick in center comes out clean. Cool, cut and enjoy!

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