

SHARE Newspaper

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What's Splendid about Splenda?

Now the soda companies are in on it too, going to 'low carb' drinks. Coke is giving us C2, and Pepsi has Edge. Both have about half the calories of the regular version, and claim lower carbs as well.

Both drinks are still sweetened with high fructose corn syrup, so they are not sugar-free or calorie-free. But they replace some of the fructose with a super-sweet artificial sweetener. The corn syrup gives the taste we like, and no aftertaste. The other sweetener boosts the sweetness, so that less corn syrup (carbs) is needed.

Coke's new C2 is using Acesulfame-K. It is 200 times sweeter than sugar. It is similar to saccharin, but has been judged to be safer. Since our bodies can't use it, we get no calories from it. It does not break down in storage, so the soda can sit a long time and still taste good. But that K stands for potassium. If you have to avoid foods high in potassium, stay away from this one.

The artificial sweetener in Pepsi's Edge is sucralose, or Splenda. It is made from regular sugar, but has three chlorine molecules stuck to it. The chlorine makes it taste even sweeter than plain sugar, but doesn't let our bodies digest it. It goes in one end and out the other, and leaves no calories behind. It does not break down in storage.

The nice thing about Splenda is that we can cook with it almost the same as with sugar. Cookies don't brown as nicely, but they still look, taste and feel like cookies. You can't do that with the other artificial sweeteners. As for the sodas, if you don't like the diet versions, either of the new ones is better than the full-calorie regular version.

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