

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

FAX: 932-5261

Oct 29, 2009

BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.  
Food, Nutrition and Health Agent**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

5339 S. County Road 579

Seffner, FL 33584-3334

PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776  
e-mail:mkeith@ufl.edu**Holiday Baking Season is Upon Us**

It's hard to believe, but it's about time to start the holiday baking. Of course if you're one of the blessed ones who sends homemade cookies to all the kids, cakes to the soldiers overseas, and takes pies to every church meeting and bake sale, your baking season probably began months ago. Whether you're just gearing up, or have been at it awhile, please take some time to think about the health needs and concerns of the grateful recipients. There are a lot of people trying, or needing, to watch their weight, manage their blood sugar or lower their cholesterol. Have some pity on them and send them things they can eat without guilt!

There are various sugar substitutes on the market now that can be used in baked goods, if you make some adjustments. Sucralose, under the brand name Splenda®, has been more tested in cooking than most of the other, newer sweeteners. You won't get the exact same results with your favorite recipe, but if you know what to expect you can come closer.

There are a few main things to recognize when cooking with sucralose. Although you measure out 1 cup when the recipe calls for 1 cup, that just gives you the same level of sweetness. You'll notice that the cupful is not nearly as heavy as a cup of sugar. And if you add a few drops of water to the sucralose, you'll see that it dissolves into practically nothing. Sucralose is much fluffier than sugar, there's more air in the cup. So when you put the cupful into the batter, you will not end up with as much batter.

And without the sugar, the batter won't rise as much. That means the cake or bread will not be as big. The recipe won't make its usual 5 dozen cookies, maybe only 3 1/2 dozen instead. You can adjust for the difference by putting the cake or quick bread batter into a slightly smaller pan. Instead of a 9 inch bread pan, use an 8 inch pan. Instead of a 9 inch cake pan, use an 8 inch pan that is slightly deeper.

Another thing to be aware of is that sucralose does not brown the way sugar does. So even though the cranberry bread is cooked through, it will still look pale. There are several ways to adjust for this. You can use half sucralose and half sugar. Brown sugar or molasses will add more color and flavor than white sugar will. Or you can make the batter with sucralose, then sprinkle a little sugar on the top to brown the outside. Or once the batter is in the pan, give the top a quick spray with pan spray. Use a toothpick to test for doneness, since you won't be able to tell by color, and the cooking time with sucralose is usually less than with sugar.

Since most cakes will be frosted it's not as important if they don't brown. But if you try to use sucralose to make the frosting you won't get much. It's better to replace only about a quarter of the sugar with substitute. That way there will be enough frosting, and the color and texture will be much nicer. This is also true for fudge and candies, angel food and pound cakes.

It's a good idea to add an extra teaspoon of vanilla or other flavoring to cookie dough and pudding or custard pie fillings. And speaking of pies and puddings, remember that sucralose does not hold moisture or prevent spoilage the way sugar does. Baked goods and other products made with sucralose should always be covered and refrigerated for storage.

Here's a delicious pie that can be served plain and simple, or dressed up with whipped topping and fresh raspberries or strawberries for a company dinner. Enjoy!

### Chocolate Almond Pie

2/3 cup Splenda® no cal sweetener	1/3 cup Dutch process cocoa
1/4 cup cornstarch	1/8 tsp salt
2 1/2 cups skim milk	1/2 cup egg substitute
1 Tbsp vanilla extract	1 tsp almond extract
1 1/2 Tbsp butter or margarine	1 reduced fat graham cracker pie crust

Optional: 1 Tbsp ground almonds (put 3 Tbsp almonds in food processor until finely ground)

Fruit, almonds for garnish

Combine Splenda®, cocoa, cornstarch and salt in small mixing bowl. Set aside. Whisk milk, egg substitute, vanilla and almond extracts together in medium saucepan.

Gradually add cornstarch mixture, whisking until smooth and blended. Add butter.

Cook over medium heat whisking constantly until mixture begins to boil. Boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Sprinkle ground almonds over crust if using.

Pour filling into pie crust and cover gently with waxed paper (to prevent skin from forming). Chill 2 hours. Top with fresh raspberries, strawberries or slivered almonds,

and fat free whipped topping if desired to serve. Serves 8-10.

*Hillsborough County Extension is a cooperative service of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and the University of Florida.*

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IN AGRICULTURE, HOME ECONOMICS, STATE OF FLORIDA, IFAS, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING