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functional medicine

# "Sugar-Free" Explained

"Sugar-free" is a marketing term that may or may not be informative. In general, it is a good idea to limit processed and added sugar. However, the question you must ask yourself when you see this claim is "why"?

There are 2 reasons a product may be labelled as "sugar-free". The first is that it may be naturally low in sugar (unsweetened tea). The other is that it may be sweetened with an alternative sweetener (sugar-free tea that still tastes sweet).

Alternative sweeteners are not an innocent substitute for sugar. Many think they are harmless because they do not contain calories. However, your body still senses and responds hormonally as if it were real sugar (causing undesired blood sugar swings, cravings, and unhealthy weight gain). The compounds in alternative sweeteners (like aspartame, sucralose, anything that ends in -itol and even stevia) can disrupt your gut, brain, and hormones. Your best bet is to choose foods that are naturally low in sugar or that contain sugar from nature (like honey, maple syrup, or fruit).

