

[IMAGE]

## Why Artificial Sweeteners Could Be Bad for Weight Loss

By Editorial Staff

For decades, millions of people have switched from sugar-sweetened beverages to the artificially sweetened variety in an effort to reduce calorie intake and lose weight. The food and beverage industry has jumped on the opportunity, including artificial sweeteners in an increasingly larger percentage of foods. But does artificial sugar actually create problems when it comes to losing weight? Let's look at the science courtesy of new research that compared the effects of an artificial ("non-nutritive") sweetener (sucralose) versus a natural (nutritive) sugar (sucrose; table sugar) on appetite and reward processing.

In the study, published in *JAMA Network Open*, researchers gave participants 300 milliliters of a drink sweetened with sucralose, a drink sweetened with sucrose or water on three visits. On each visit, in the two hours following consumption of the drink, researchers measured participants' brain activation related to appetite and food cravings (response to pictures of high-calorie foods); blood levels of sugar, insulin and other metabolic hormones; and the amount of food subjects ate at a snack buffet available to participants at the end of each session.

weight loss - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Results revealed three significant findings:

- Participants who consumed the artificially sweetened (sucralose) drink had increased activity in brain regions that dictate food cravings and appetite. This was observed in women and obese individuals.
- All participants who drank the sucralose drink experienced decreases in hormones (e.g., leptin) responsible for telling the body it's full.
- Female participants only who drank the sucralose drink consumed more at the snack buffet at the end of each session.

So, if artificial sweeteners have the potential to increase food cravings and appetite, their use by people trying to lose weight could create real challenges, not solutions; especially for women who are overweight or obese. Talk to your doctor about the *best* way to lose weight – by eating fewer high-calorie, non-nutritive foods (processed foods, sweets, etc.) and exercising regularly: the safe, natural way to burn calories, get in better shape, improve your health and feel better, all at the same time!

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