



ABOUT LOW- AND NO-CALORIE SWEETENERS

WHAT ARE LOW- AND NO-CALORIE SWEETENERS?



Low- and no-calorie sweeteners are **food ingredients used to provide a sweet taste to various foodstuffs**, including soft drinks, resulting in no- or less sugars and calories.



Low- and no-calorie sweeteners are safe. They have been assessed as safe by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) after a rigorous scientific assessment - which all additives must undergo - before being authorised for use in the European Union.



There are **11 low- and no-calorie sweeteners approved for use in soft drinks in Europe and most parts of the world.** These four are the most frequently used, either on their own or in combination, to achieve the desired taste profile:

- Acesulfame-K
- Aspartame
- Stevia (steviol glycosides)
- Sucralose



Just as sugars have different sweet taste profiles, so do low- and no-calorie sweeteners. They are used on their own or in combination with sugars or other low- and no-calorie sweeteners in soft drinks to provide a unique taste profile.



WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS OF LOW- AND NO-CALORIE SWEETENERS?



The key benefit of low- and no-calorie sweeteners is to **provide a sweet taste to foodstuffs, including soft drinks, yet providing no, or hardly any, calories**. This supports consumers who wish to reduce their sugar and calorie intake whilst still being able to enjoy great tasting foods and drinks.



Low- and no-calorie sweetened beverages **provide people with diabetes with a wider choice of great tasting drinks, but with no or less effects on their blood glucose** compared to sugar-sweetened beverages.

HOW ARE LOW- AND NO-CALORIE SWEETENERS LABELLED?



To provide transparent information to consumers, **European food labelling legislation requires that sweeteners are clearly labelled at least twice** on soft drinks and on any other foodstuffs containing them. This means that their presence is clearly flagged and therefore consumers can easily see whether their food or drink contains a low-calorie sweetener.



The list of ingredients must state that the product includes a sweetener, together with the specific name of the sweetener (eg. aspartame) or the E-number (eg. E 951).



HOW ARE LOW- AND NO-CALORIE SWEETENERS USED IN EUROPE?



Low- and no-calorie sweeteners are ingredients typically found in soft drinks, desserts, dairy products, confectionery, chewing gums, hot chocolate drinks, toothpastes, and cough syrups. They can also be used instead of sugars in homemade foods and drinks.



Most are also available as tabletop sweeteners, which are used in tea and coffee or on other foods, such as fruit and breakfast cereals.



Since the 1970s, the European soft drinks industry has used low- and no-calorie sweeteners as one of the most effective ways to reduce the sugar content of soft drinks already on the market and to innovate to create new low- and no-calorie soft drinks.



Increasingly, advertising and promotion strategies encourage consumers towards more low- and no-calorie beverages.



According to GlobalData, low- and no-calorie soft drinks represent an average 30% market share of total soft drink sales across Europe, with several European countries achieving even higher shares of sales of no- and low-calorie drinks.



The continued support of national public health authorities in ensuring the scientific approval, authorisation and use of low- and no-calorie sweeteners is key to helping the soft drinks industry make further progress in providing more choice with less sugar.

ABOUT UNESDA SOFT DRINKS EUROPE

Established in 1958, UNESDA Soft Drinks Europe is the Brussels-based trade association representing the non-alcoholic beverages sector.

Its membership comprises 10 companies and 24 national associations from across Europe. UNESDA members are involved in the production and/or distribution of a wide variety of non-alcoholic beverages including still drinks, carbonates, fruit drinks, energy drinks, iced teas and sports drinks.

UNESDA's policy priorities are sustainability (e.g. beverage packaging, collection, recycling), responsibility (e.g. sugar reduction, school policies, marketing practices towards children and labelling) and competitiveness (e.g. taxation, market access).

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