

# Campaign for Sweetener Transparency

## *Supporting Accuracy in Labeling*

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Now more than ever before, consumers want more information about the food they consume – where it comes from, how it was produced, and what ingredients were used. Consumer awareness and demand for transparency has increased the amount of nutrition information that food manufacturers provide about their products. However, a significant gap remains surrounding the use of low- and no- calorie sweeteners in consumer products.

Changes to the Nutrition Facts label were introduced to create greater transparency and provide consumers with information to make more informed choices. The new Nutrition Facts label helps consumers identify the presence and amount of added sugars in the foods and beverages they purchase and consume.

However, the addition of “Added Sugars” to the Nutrition Facts label has also spurred food and beverage manufacturers to increase their use of alternative sweeteners. In fact, the number of products that contain at least one non-nutritive sweetener has tripled in the last 4 years. Consumers may wish to reduce added sugars intake, but they do not want to do so by increasing their consumption of sugar substitutes.

While once limited to use as tabletop sweeteners and ingredients in diet foods, alternative sweeteners can now be found in a variety of consumer products including breads, cereals, granola bars, yogurt, ice cream, flavored milk, and children’s beverages.

### **High Intensity Sweeteners Approved for Use in the Food Supply**

Advantame      Aspartame      Acesulfame Potassium      Neotame  
Saccharin      Luo Han Guo Extract (Monk Fruit)      Stevia      Sucralose

### **Sugar Alcohols Approved for Use in the Food Supply**

Erythritol      Isomalt      Lactitol      Maltitol      Mannitol      Sorbitol  
Hydrogenated Starch Hydrolysates      Vegetable Glycerol      Xylitol

In addition to the sugar substitutes listed above, food and beverage manufacturers are also seeking out novel ingredients to reformulate products with sweetening agents that do not require disclosure on the Nutrition Facts label, such as Allulose, Polydextrose, and Chicory Root Fiber.

The increasing use of alternative sweeteners in the food supply has gone undetected due to a troubling lack of transparency in the marketing and labeling of foods and beverages that contain these ingredients.

Food labeling is intended to help consumers make informed decisions about the products they purchase, yet current labeling regulations fail to provide consumers accurate and clear information about the use of low- and no- calorie sweeteners.

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Consumer research demonstrates there is a need for FDA to ensure that the presence of alternative sweeteners is effectively communicated to consumers. New consumer opinion research conducted by Quadrant Strategies (1,002 sample size) found that :

- When given a list of food additives, consumers did not recognize sugar substitutes as sweetening ingredients 63% of the time
  - 73% of parents believe it's important to know the amount of sugar substitutes in their children's food
  - 66% of consumers think it's important for sugar substitutes to be clearly identified as sweeteners on food labels
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The level of transparency in food labeling provided by FDA's regulatory framework is incomplete - it should be extended to the growing range of high intensity sweeteners, sugar alcohols, and novel sweeteners that are being used in foods in the United States.

**As part of the Campaign for Sweetener Transparency, the Sugar Association has submitted a Petition requesting the FDA take actions to protect consumers by:**

- Identify all non-nutritive sweeteners in the ingredient list by including the word "Sweetener" in parentheses after the name of each sweetener in a product.
- Indicate the type and quantity of non-nutritive sweeteners, in milligrams per serving, on food and beverage products consumed by children.
- Require products that feature a sugar content claim (i.e. No/Low/Reduced Sugar) to disclose "Sweetened with [name of Sweetener(s)]" beneath the claim.
- Extend the current requirement to disclose gastrointestinal side effects from the consumption of sorbitol and mannitol to all sugar alcohols and sugar substitutes with known side effects and lower the threshold for disclosure to the lowest observed levels of effect.
- Ensure all sugar content claims related to sugar and sugar substitutes are truthful and non-misleading to consumers.

The changes requested in the [Citizen Petition](#) are necessary to close a glaring gap in food labeling, but most importantly, they are needed to provide consumers with complete transparency and honest information about the contents of the products they purchase and consume.

The actions requested by the Petition will help fulfill the FDA's goal to provide consumers with more information to make informed choices and modernize ingredient labels to help people better understand what is in their food, as described in its [2018 Nutrition Innovation Strategy](#).

For more information, visit [www.sugar.org](http://www.sugar.org), follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and connect with us on [Facebook](#).

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