



## Sugar alcohols – not sugar, not alcohol!

- Sugar alcohols are used to add sweetness to food without adding sugar. They have fewer calories than sugar, but more calories than “non-nutritive sweeteners” such as Splenda<sup>®</sup>, Equal<sup>®</sup>, Sweet n=Low<sup>®</sup>, or Sweet One<sup>®</sup>.
- Sugar alcohols are not sugar and not alcohol. They are carbohydrates that have a chemical structure similar to sugar and similar to alcohol – but are neither!
- The sugar alcohols are, lactitol, mannitol, sorbitol, and xylitol - sometimes called “polyols”. They can replace sugar, usually on a one-to-one basis and contain fewer calories than sugar. Remember- they are not calorie-free!
- Sorbitol, mannitol, and xylitol are found in plant products such as fruits and berries but are usually artificially synthesized. Lactitol is made from lactose, the carbohydrate in milk.
- Sugar alcohols are often found in “sugar-free” candy, gum and cookies – remember they still have calories!
- A large amount of polyols (eg, greater than 50 grams of sorbitol per day, or greater than 20 grams of mannitol per day) may cause diarrhea. Products with sorbitol and mannitol may have the following statement on the label: "excess consumption may have a laxative effect."

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