

Script – Broadcasting – Sugar substitutes and weight loss aren't friends

INTRO

If you're thinking about using sugar substitutes to help with weight loss, think again. That's the word from the World Health Organization (WHO).

According to new guidelines, replacing free sugars with non-sugar sweeteners (NNS) doesn't help people control their weight long-term. The WHO first issued guidelines on sugar intake in 2015, recommending that adults and children reduce their daily intake of free sugars to less than 10% of their total energy intake.

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The latest review added that there might be "potential undesirable effects" from the long-term use of sugar substitutes such as an increased risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. There were 283 studies included in the review.

Jason Crum, a dietitian with OSF HealthCare, agrees and adds there could be other potential risks.

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Jason Crum, dietitian, OSF HealthCare

2:23 – 3:00

"For most of my clients we don't want to expect weight loss by just simply avoiding the sugars and using sugar alcohols or sugar substitutes of a different type. It's looking at why they are consuming the sugary form in the first place? They could have an imbalanced dietary intake, it could be eating foods at the wrong times, it could be emotionally eating. If you're going to have a sugar substitute, you're not quelling that emotional response anymore. So it makes those cravings worse later in the day, and you might end up eating more total calories than if you had something that had the sugar in it." (:38)

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Instead, experts say that other ways to reduce free sugars intake include consuming food with naturally occurring sugars, like fruit, or unsweetened food and beverages. Crum says it comes down to making a lifestyle change.

Crum says the bottom-line is don't rely on sugar substitutes. If you do, you'll end up craving more and eating more. Instead, evaluate why you're selecting the foods you eat in the first place. It will make things easier in the long run rather than cutting out certain foods all at once. Going cold turkey, he adds, seldom works for most people.