Artificial Sweeteners Linked to Stroke, Heart Disease

Recent studies suggest artificial sweeteners elevate blood sugar levels as well.

September 15, 2022 By Laura Schmidt

A recent study adds to existing evidence that consumption of artificial sweeteners may negatively impact one's health.

The study, published in British Medical Journal, involved over 100,000 French adults and found that those who consumed large amounts of aspartame had a higher risk for stroke compared with those who didn't consume the sweetener. Aspartame is an artificial sweetener sold under the brand names Equal and NutraSweet and may be found in candy, diet soda, yogurt and cereals. More than half of the participants' daily aspartame intake was consumed via soft drinks and sweetened dairy products.

The study's lead author, Mathilde Touvier, PhD, the research director at the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research, said artificial sweeteners may not be the safest alternative to sugar.

Two other artificial sweeteners—sucralose, sold as Splenda and found in ice cream, baked goods and canned fruit, and acesulfame potassium, sold as Sunnett and Sweet One and often used in sugar-free soda—increased the risk for coronary heart disease.

A separate small study found that non-nutritive sweetener (sugar substitutes with few calories or nutrients) can alter a person's gut microbes and raise blood sugar levels. Specifically, sucralose and saccharin, found in Sweet 'N Low, altered some people's ability to process glucose.

In an interview with NBC, Katie Page, PhD, an associate professor of medicine at the University of Southern California, encouraged people to decrease sugar consumption in general. She noted that table sugar or natural substitutes, such as agave, still may not be the healthiest options.

"The more data that comes out showing these adverse health effects, the less we're going to want to encourage people to switch from added sugars to non-nutritive sweeteners," Page said.

To learn more, read "Artificial Sweeteners Linked to Increased Cancer Risk."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/artificial-sweeteners-linked-stroke-heart-disease