

Sweetener	The Scoop	Here's the Skinny
Sucralose (Splenda)	Discovered in 1976 but not introduced for widespread use for many years. More than 500 times sweeter than sucrose, stored in body fats, suitable for baking, and does not affect levels of blood sugar.	The research is least complete on this one, but go ahead and keep it in the cupboard. Its widespread use is too new for us to know any of the long-term effects, but it appears the most promising—and it's the best one to use for cooking.
Aspartame (NutraSweet)	Entered the market in 1981. Several studies have found that it has adverse health effects, but those studies were very limited.	It's come under a lot of scrutiny and has basically stood the test of time. But it's the sweetener that hangs around the longest in your body, and it cannot be heated—it turns into formaldehyde (which could help you save on funeral expenses). It's also rumored to limit the brain's ability to use certain vitamins, antioxidants, and the mineral magnesium.
Saccharin	Has been around since the early 1900s, and while some studies found a health risk, those studies have significant limitations.	It appears to be one of the safest sweeteners and the only one with real long-term data, even if some of the data is not positive. (If you consume more than eighty twelve-ounce diet sodas a day, you're at an increased risk of bladder cancer—good luck!)
Agave nectar	It's a hypersweet natural substance.	Try it. While it's very high in calories, you need only a fraction of the amount of sugar needed to gain the same level of sweetness. You can order through <a href="http://veganessentials.com">veganessentials.com</a> or <a href="http://blueagavenectar.com">blueagavenectar.com</a> .
Stevia	A noncaloric natural herb. Taste isn't ideal, and stevia seems to lower sperm counts in some studies.	For the taste and the potential side effects, no thanks. No diet drink is worth the potential of sterility.