



ELITE

Personal Training and Fitness Solutions

HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

3/13 - Erythritol - Not So Sweet After All

Introduction

Erythritol (pronounced ear-rith-ri-tall) is a type of carbohydrate called a sugar alcohol. Sugar alcohols are water soluble compounds that occur naturally in small amounts in some fruits and vegetables. Erythritol is also commercially produced by fermentation from a simple sugar derived from corn called dextrose.



Erythritol has been used as an artificial sweetener since the 1990s. It became popular because food could be sweetened without increasing calories. Sugar has 4 calories per gram, but erythritol has zero. That's because the small intestine absorbs it quickly and it is excreted in the urine within 24 hours. Erythritol doesn't have a chance to metabolize, so it isn't converted into energy.

You can find erythritol and other sugar substitutes in stores and online. Erythritol is sold in bulk to companies that use it to sweeten reduced-calorie and sugar-free food and drinks. Erythritol is often mixed with popular sugar substitutes like aspartame, Stevia and Truvia to make them sweeter.



Don't Worry, It's Safe

Our friends at the World Health Organization and FDA approved erythritol in 1990 and 2001, respectively. We were told that erythritol was safe for consumption except for the occasional gastrointestinal upset. In fact, individuals with metabolic conditions such as type II diabetes and obesity were routinely advised to consume erythritol to improve blood sugar levels and facilitate weight loss.



Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at Eliteptf.com for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

Well, Not Really

Recently, researchers examined the link between erythritol and cardiovascular risk. They found that erythritol consumption increased cardiovascular risk, including the risk of heart attack, stroke, thrombosis [blood clotting] and death related to cardiovascular event. This research was published in the Journal of Natural Medicine in January 2023.



The researchers first analyzed blood samples from 1157 participants. They found multiple compounds linked to cardiovascular risk. However, erythritol had some of the strongest links to cardiovascular events.

Next, the researchers analyzed blood samples from 2149 participants from the United States and 833 participants from Europe. Participants with cardiovascular disease had much higher plasma levels of erythritol.

Participants in the US and European studies with the highest 25 percentile erythritol blood levels were 2.5 - 4.5 times more likely to have heart attack or stroke than those in the lowest 25 percentile.

Researchers also investigated erythritol's impact on blood clotting. Through multiple tests they found that increased erythritol levels produced high rates of clot formation, thus increasing thrombosis potential.

EPT's Position on Erythritol

Nutritional metabolism is complex and often unpredictable. Even though erythritol is a naturally occurring substance, when consumed as a food additive it can lead to platelet dysfunction, clotting disorders and increased risk of heart attack and stroke.



Considering the latest research, plus everything else we know about artificial sweeteners, it makes sense to avoid erythritol and other artificial sweeteners. We advise clients to eat natural foods. Run away from the artificial sweeteners and processed foods peddled by the destructive food industry.

Please reach out to EPT. Our trainers are certified in functional nutrition as well as fitness. We can help you develop safe and sustainable eating patterns.



Reference

Witkowski, M., Nemet, I., Alamri, H. et al. The artificial sweetener erythritol and cardiovascular event risk. Nat Med (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-023-02223-9>



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