

STEVIA - CONSUMER FAQ

WHAT IS STEVIA?

- Stevia is a plant of the Asteraceae (sunflower) family. Highly purified extracts made from Stevia leaves have been used as a natural, non-caloric sweetener for many years.

WHERE IS STEVIA NATIVE TO?

- It is native to Paraguay, South America.

IS THERE A HISTORY OF STEVIA USAGE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION?

- Yes. It has been used in South America for centuries and in Japan for many decades. In the US, it became popular after GRAS affirmation in 2008.

WHAT IS THE CALORIC CONTENT OF STEVIA EXTRACTS?

- None: 0 kcal/g

WHY IS IT NON-CALORIC?

- Humans lack the enzymes to digest steviol glycosides so does not provide calories

WHY ARE STEVIA LEAVES SWEET?

- Stevia leaves contain components called “steviol glycosides,” which provide a sweet taste.

HOW SWEET IS STEVIA?

- It is about 200-300 times sweeter than table sugar.

WHAT ARE STEVIOL GLYCOSIDES?

- Glycosides are glucose like molecules attached to steviol.
- Steviol glycosides include, but not limited to, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A (Reb A), Rebaudiosides B, C, D, F, Steviolbioside, Rubusoside and Dulcoside A.

IS STEVIA EXTRACT APPROVED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION BY REGULATORY AUTHORITIES IN THE US AND GLOBALLY?

- Yes. It is approved in the USA, European Union (EU), and many other countries. There are about 60 countries using Stevia in the food and supplement products. In the US, stevia extract is GRAS (Generally Recognized As Safe) (GRAS)

IS STEVIA NATURAL?

- Yes. The leaves are natural, and the extraction processing does not alter the natural component of steviol glycosides.

HOW ARE STEVIA EXTRACTS MADE?

- By water or ethanol extraction, followed by filtration, purification and concentration of sweet components.

ARE ALL STEVIA PRODUCTS IN THE MARKET THE SAME?

- No. There are products that are powdered versions of whole stevia leaf as well as extracts. It is the highly purified extracts that are used as sweeteners. Shaklee only uses the highly purified extract Rebaudioside A (Reb A) containing >95% steviol glycosides in our products.

CAN DIABETIC PEOPLE USE STEVIA EXTRACTS?

- Yes. It does not affect blood glucose or insulin levels in either healthy or diabetic individuals. It may be beneficial for people trying to limit calorie intake from sugar if they replace sugar with Stevia.

ARE STEVIA EXTRACTS ALLOWED FOR CHILDREN'S CONSUMPTION?

- YES, there are no age restrictions

WHAT IS GLYCEMIC INDEX OF STEVIA?

- ZERO. NO impact on blood glucose levels.

CAN STEVIA EXTRACT BE USED IN COOKING?

- Yes. It is safe in cooking because it is soluble in water and heat stable. It is also stable in acidic and alkaline conditions.

HOW DOES IT TASTE?

- Most people are pleased with the taste, but some people do experience an aftertaste.

ARE STEVIA PLANTS GENETICALLY MODIFIED?

- No.

WHAT KIND OF STEVIA EXTRACT SHAKLEE USES?

- Stevia extracts included in Shaklee products are highly purified, standardized extracts containing 97% Reb A. It is compliant with JECFA specification.

IS THERE RECOMMENDED DAILY USAGE OR DOSE?

- Yes. JECFA set the acceptable daily intake (ADI) of steviol glycosides as 4 mg Stevia Equivalent(SE)/kg (or 2.2 LB) body weight. Therefore, 280 mg SE per day for 70 kg (154 LB) body weight.
- However, studies using pharmacological, higher dose of stevia (e.g., 1,000 mg or more) meeting JECFA specification showed NO side effects.

WHAT IS STEVIA EQUIVALENT (SE)?

- Because there are various forms of steviol glycosides with different molecular weights, SE is used to set a standardized level of ADI. There are various conversion factors to calculate SE for various steviol glycosides. For Reb A, the conversion factor is 0.33. Therefore, if there is 100 mg of Reb A in a product, it gives 33 SE.

ARE THERE ANY HEALTH BENEFITS BY USING STEVIA?

- Yes, if you replace Sugar with Stevia. There are studies reporting people using Stevia to reduce caloric intake, eventually their body weights, fasting blood glucose level, and blood pressure were improved / reduced.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECT OR ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO USING STEVIA?

- NO. Allergic reactions have not been reported with use of purified Stevia extract, such as Reb A (97+%) that is used in all US Shaklee Products.