

## **Consumers Have a Right to Know**

**The majority of parents with children under 18 say they believe all natural products are better for them than those containing artificial ingredients, according to a January online study conducted by Harris Interactive and commissioned by the Sugar Association. Unfortunately, few are able to recognize common artificial sweeteners used in everyday foods and beverages.**

- 81% of parents in this country feel natural foods are better for them than those with artificial ingredients, which might explain why more than half (52%) of all parents make an effort to avoid artificial sweeteners.
- Even though about three-quarters (76%) of parents turn to food labels to help guide purchases, fewer are actually able to identify common artificial sweeteners used in food products.
- When shown the ingredient label of a popular children's product, given to dehydrated infants, only 4% of parents could identify all the sweeteners. About one in 7 (13%) parents couldn't identify any of the four sweeteners used.
- Many common artificial sweeteners had almost no name recognition. Only 1% of parents had ever heard of neotame, 5% of acesulfame k, 5% of erythritol, and 14% of polydextrose.
- While branded chemical artificial sweeteners—Equal (90%), Sweet N Low (90%), and Splenda (87%)—had high name recognition, those figures dropped by as much as about half when the scientific names of these products often found on food labels were used, such as saccharin (73%), aspartame (67%), and sucralose (43%).
- Consumer confusion is particularly high among minority and low-income families.

**Considering 87% of parents say the sweetener used in a product is at least somewhat important to them when deciding what food or beverages to serve their kids, they have a right to know what sweeteners they are feeding their family. Current labeling standards clearly aren't working.**

- In Canada, food manufacturers are required to list the artificial sweeteners they use, and the amounts used, on the front of packages.
- The Sugar Association has petitioned the Food and Drug Administration to follow Canada's lead and clear up consumer confusion with similar front-of-package labeling for artificial sweeteners.
- That petition has been ignored by the FDA for nearly five years.

**With more and more food manufacturers using a "multiple sweetener cocktail approach" for their products, and with more and more sweeteners being invented, the need for FDA to update and revise labeling standards has never been greater.**

### **About the Survey**

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf the Sugar Association between January 6-12, 2010 among 1,268 parents of children aged 17 years or younger. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.