



**NOW
 YOU
 KNOW**

Naturally Sweet

4 chemical-free sugar substitutes

Meet four sugar substitutes that don't come in pink, blue or yellow packets.

<for more, read on below>

By Ashley Gartland; From www.oprah.com,

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITIES

MARCH '12

SATURDAY, MARCH 31

Rotary Club of Nassau Bike/Run/Walk Biathlon

Contact +242-325-5906

The 25-mile bike, 5-mile run/walk race will start and end at Arawak Cay. Registration will be at the Cricket Club Friday, March 30, from 6–8PM. The race starts at 6AM. All proceeds will benefit Rotary charities.

SATURDAY, MARCH 31

Mario & Big O's Charity Fun, Run, Walk & Skate

Contact +242-326-8012

Mario's 2nd Annual Fun, Run, Walk & Skate event begins at Mario's at 6AM. Registration is \$20 before the deadline (Friday, March 30) or \$25 on Run Day. All proceeds will be donated to The Bahamas Women's Crisis Centre.

APRIL 12–15

CARIFTA Swimming Championships

Contact +242-323-1091 / 326-1450

The Bahamas Swimming Federation presents a 36-member swim team to compete against 21 Caribbean region countries in the CARIFTA Swimming Championships to be held at Betty K. Kenning Aquatic Centre.

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

Ride For Hope Bahamas (EL)

Contact +242-362-4133

RFH is a charitable bike-a-thon held in Governor's Harbour, for all ages and cycling abilities, to raise money for cancer caring centers and cancer treatment programs. Late registration closed March 15.

Got a late afternoon craving? You could satisfy it with nutrient-poor white sugar or chemical-based fake sugar. Or you could indulge in a rich, natural alternative that comes with an added perk—like the power to lower your cholesterol, or a potent dose of iron. Here's the skinny on a handful of healthier sweeteners.



AGAVE NECTAR

The Scoop: Made from the Agave plant, this syrup with notes of caramel has slightly more calories than table sugar but is about 25% sweeter, so you can get away with less of it. Plus: Agave nectar does good things for your gut. It contains a type of dietary fiber, known as a prebiotic, that nourishes intestinal bacteria.

How to enjoy it: Drizzle over yogurt with active cultures to give those friendly flora an extra boost. The syrup also goes well with drinks because it dissolves easily in liquids. When cooking, remember that $\frac{3}{4}$ cup adds the same sweetness as 1 cup sugar.

appears to be easy on the heart and hips: In one study, people who had about ten teaspoons of honey every day for a month lowered their cholesterol by up to 3.3% while maintaining or even losing weight.

How to enjoy it: There are more than 300 kinds to sample—from blueberry to buckwheat. Darker honeys have more nutrients and are more flavorful. Try different varieties with cheeses or winter squash. In baked goods, Heidi Swanson, author of *Super Natural Cooking*, recommends substituting $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey for every cup of sugar, reducing the liquid in the recipe by $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, and increasing the baking soda by $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.

STEVIA

The Scoop: The powdered extract of the South American stevia plant is a zero-calorie sugar substitute that's 100% natural. While it's 200–300 times sweeter than sugar, stevia doesn't cause a spike in blood glucose levels—sparing you the crash that follows a spoonful of the white stuff.

How to enjoy it: Some brands have a licorice aftertaste, so experiment until you find one you like. When baking, replace all but $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar in the recipe; for each $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar removed, use $3\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. stevia. To add a sweet finish to muffins, dust the tops with 1 Tbsp. stevia, 1 Tbsp. cornstarch, and 1 tsp. ground cinnamon.

BLACKSTRAP MOLASSES

The Scoop: A tablespoon of viscous molasses—a by-product of sugarcane processing—packs about 15% of the daily iron requirement for premenopausal women, as well as vitamin B6, magnesium, calcium, and more antioxidants than any other natural sweetener.

How to enjoy it: David Grotto, author of *101 Foods That Could Save Your Life!*, stirs a few tablespoons into baked beans. When cooking with molasses, consider blending it with other sweeteners to temper its acidic flavor: Swanson replaces up to half the sugar in a recipe; every cup of sugar removed becomes $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups molasses. She also cuts the liquid by up to $\frac{1}{3}$ cup and adds 1 tsp. baking soda per cup of molasses.

HONEY

The Scoop: This kitchen staple provides a concentrated dose of antioxidants, and it



ALLERGIES

Article from: www.webMD.com

Uncover Your Allergy Triggers

Nearly 20% of people suffer from allergies. Allergies are an abnormal response of the immune system where the body's defenses react to a usually harmless substance in the environment, such as pollen, animal dander, or food. Almost anything can trigger an allergic reaction, which can range from mild and annoying to sudden and life-threatening. Here are some common triggers.



POLLEN

Exposure to pollen from trees, grasses, and weeds can trigger hay fever or seasonal allergies. Symptoms include sneezing, runny nose, nasal congestion, and itchy, watery eyes. Treatments include over-the-counter products, prescription drugs, and allergy shots. Prevent symptoms by staying indoors on windy days when pollen counts are high, closing windows, and running the air conditioning.



ANIMAL DANDER

Proteins secreted by oil glands in an animal's skin and present in their saliva can cause allergic reactions for some. The allergy can take two or more years to develop and symptoms may not subside until months after ending contact with the animal. If your pet is causing allergies, make your bedroom a pet-free zone, avoid carpets, and wash the animal regularly. A HEPA filter and frequent vacuuming may also help.



Allergy Relief

From www.webMD.com,

Myths and Facts About Seasonal Allergies

[<for more, read on below>](#)



Desert Climates Cure Allergies

MYTH

Don't pick up and move to escape your allergies. Changing climates can affect your reaction to allergy-triggering substances called allergens -- but only to a limited extent. Some Eastern and Midwestern plants are rare out West, but grass and ragweed pollens are found nearly everywhere. Also, once you move, you may simply start reacting to different allergens.



Flowers Commonly Trigger Allergies

MYTH

Some florists with prolonged exposure to flowers can have allergy symptoms. But very few people suffer allergic reactions from a bouquet of beautiful blossoms. The culprit is usually the pollen produced by trees, grasses, and weeds (and occasionally flowers) that's picked up by breezes and carried through the air.



There's No Pollen on the Beach

MYTH

Compared to other regions, beaches can be nice vacation spots for allergy sufferers. Beaches generally have lower pollen counts. However, grasses are common near beaches, and ragweed pollen can be found as far as 400 miles out to sea. Also, even a short drive or walk away from the sand will expose you to the region's pollen-emitting plant life.



Pollen Counts Can Predict Bad Days

FACT

Pollen counts determine how many grains of pollen were measured in a specific amount of air over a specific amount of time. You can use the daily pollen count as a tool for minimizing allergen exposure. One source of pollen counts is the National Allergy Bureau. It provides accurate data from 85 U.S. counting stations, plus two each in Canada and Argentina.



"Local" Honey Can Reduce Allergies

MYTH

The theory that eating local honey helps is mainly anecdotal and hasn't been sufficiently verified by research. Believers hope that the pollen content in honey will inoculate them against allergic rhinitis. But few controlled studies have addressed this theory. Besides, unlike carefully controlled allergy shots, pollens found in honey may not include the ones that affect you.



ALLERGIES CONTINUED



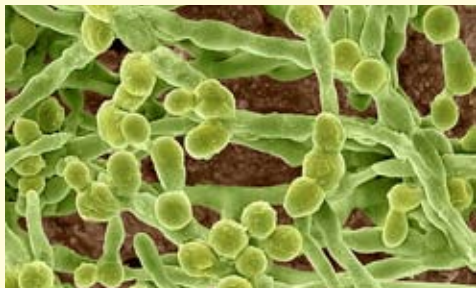
DUST MITES

Dust mites are microscopic organisms that live in house dust. They thrive in areas of high humidity and feed on the dead skin cells of humans and their pets, as well as on pollen, bacteria, and fungi. Help prevent dust mite allergies by covering mattresses, pillows, and box springs, using hypoallergenic pillows, washing sheets weekly in hot water, and keeping the house free of dust collecting-items such as curtains, and carpet.



INSECT STINGS

People who are allergic to stings can have a severe or even life-threatening reaction. Symptoms include extensive swelling and redness from the sting or bite that may last a week or more, nausea, fatigue, and low-grade fever. Rarely, insect stings may cause anaphylaxis, with symptoms including difficulty breathing, hives, swelling of the face, throat, or mouth, rapid pulse, dizziness, or a sharp drop in blood pressure. For those severely allergic, epinephrine should be administered immediately after a sting.



MOLDS

Molds produce allergens, irritants, and in some cases, potentially toxic substances. Inhaling or touching mold or mold spores may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. There are many types of mold; all need moisture to grow. They can be found in damp areas such as basements or bathrooms, as well as in grass or mulch. Avoid activities that trigger symptoms, such as raking leaves. Ventilate moist areas in the home.

This and all information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor. Family Guardian & BahamaHealth disclaim any liability for the decisions you make based on this information.

Allergy Relief continued



You Will Outgrow Your Allergies

MYTH

Some children do outgrow certain allergies. But very few outgrow hay fever. A hospital in Sweden tracked 82 patients with allergic rhinitis. The patients reported that 99% still suffered from allergic rhinitis 12 years later, although 39% reported improvement.



Rain Washes Away Pollen

FACT

The best days for allergy sufferers to go outdoors are those immediately following heavy rains. Pollen levels can be affected by temperature, time of day, humidity, and rain. Pollen counts run lowest on chilly, soggy days. They tend to run highest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., especially on hot, dry, and windy days. If you want to go outdoors, try to wait until the late afternoon.



Mold Allergies Strike Only Indoors

MYTH

Mold spores are fungi and can be found almost anywhere. They grow on soil, decaying leaves, and rotting wood -- especially in damp weather. You're most likely to have an allergic reaction to mold in the summer. Most outdoor molds aren't active during the winter. When spring comes around, molds grow on plants that died in the cold weather.



Hay Fever Comes From Hay

MYTH

Hay fever isn't a fever, and it doesn't come from hay. Hay fever or allergic rhinitis is caused by tree, grass, and weed pollens as well as mold spores, some of which grow well in rural areas. If you have allergies, you may be more likely to suffer a reaction in a rural area. But some studies have shown that children who grow up on farms are less likely to develop allergies.



No Childhood Allergies? No Worries.

MYTH

Allergies often begin in childhood. But you can develop allergies as an adult, too. Some occur after you change your environment and encounter new allergens. Some adults redevelop symptoms they had during childhood.



Important Note: The following information is intended to supplement, not substitute for the expertise and judgement of your physician, pharmacist or other healthcare professional. It should not be construed to indicate that use of the drug is safe, appropriate, or effective for you. Consult your healthcare professional before using this drug.

BENADRYL

Diphenhydramine is an antihistamine used to relieve symptoms of allergy, hay fever and the common cold. These symptoms include rash, itching, watery eyes, itchy eyes/nose/throat, cough, runny nose and sneezing. It is also used to prevent and treat nausea, vomiting and dizziness caused by motion sickness. Diphenhydramine can also be used to help you relax and fall asleep.

This medication works by blocking a certain natural substance (histamine) that your body makes during an allergic reaction. Its drying effects on such symptoms as watery eyes and runny nose are caused by blocking another natural substance made by your body (acetylcholine).

Cough-and-cold products have not been shown to be safe or effective in children younger than 6 years. Therefore, do not use this product to treat cold symptoms in children younger than 6 years unless specifically directed by the doctor.





ALLERGIES CONTINUED



FOOD

Milk, shellfish, nuts, and wheat are among the most common foods that cause allergies. An allergic reaction usually occurs within minutes of eating the offending food. Symptoms, which can include breathing problems, hives, vomiting, diarrhea, and swelling around the mouth, can be severe. Avoid offending foods altogether; but if exposed, treatment for life-threatening reactions with an epinephrine injection may be needed.



LATEX

Latex in gloves, condoms, and certain medical devices can trigger latex allergy. Symptoms include skin rash, eye irritation, runny nose, sneezing, wheezing, and itching of the skin or nose. Allergic reactions can range from skin redness and itching to anaphylaxis, a serious reaction which can cause difficulty breathing, and hives. Those allergic should wear a MedicAlert bracelet and carry an epinephrine kit.



MEDICATION

Symptoms of allergies to medications, such as penicillin or aspirin, can range from mild to life-threatening and can include hives, itchy eyes, congestion, and swelling in the mouth and throat. It's best to avoid the drug altogether; however, if exposed, treatment for mild symptoms with antihistamines or steroids may be recommended.

This and all information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor. Family Guardian & BahamaHealth disclaim any liability for the decisions you make based on this information.



From www.webMD.com,

A Checklist for Seasonal Allergy Sufferers

<for more, read on below>

In the spring and fall, tree, grass and weed pollens become airborne and can result in sneezing, a runny nose, and itchiness in your nose, throat, and eyes. Doctors call it seasonal allergic rhinitis or allergic conjunctivitis (when it affects the eyes) but most of us just call it hay fever.

Even when the pollen count is high and the breezes are stiff, it's possible to take steps to reduce symptoms of your seasonal allergies. Here are nine simple steps to keep your hay fever symptoms at bay.

Wear natural fabrics.

When you pick natural fabrics such as cotton, you'll attract less pollen, some experts say. Silks and synthetic fabrics tend to build up static electricity, which attracts pollen.

Wash your hair before bed.

If you're a morning shampoo person, consider switching to shampooing and showering before bed instead.

That way pollen that collected on your hair during the day won't rub off on your pillow.

Close up the house.

Open windows can be refreshing, but they let in pollen.

Close windows and outside doors, especially on high-pollen days, and turn on the heat or the air-conditioning.

Use the "recirculate" option in the car.

Keep windows and sunroofs closed. Especially on high-pollen days, recirculate the air in your car instead of using the vent, which may let in pollen. Use the air conditioner and adjust the temperature to your comfort.

Service the filters in your furnace and/or air conditioner

Change them at the intervals recommended by the manufacturer, or more frequently if it seems to help.

Adjust your indoor humidity level

If spores from mold cause your allergies, aim for a humidity level of less than 50%. Consider buying a digital thermometer with a humidity gauge, available for about \$40 or less.

You may need a dehumidifier to get a level lower than 50%.

Set up the dehumidifier on the main living level of the house, if your house has more than one story.

Check the pollen count and plan your day accordingly.

The web site of the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology offers a daily pollen count by zip code, e-mailed to you. Or use the Pollen Widget, found on webMD.com.

If the predicted pollen count is high, try to plan your schedule accordingly. Delay errands and exercise, if possible, until later in the day, when pollen counts are typically lower. Take your allergy medications with you. Wear sunglasses, which can help keep pollen out of your eyes.

Pollen counts are usually highest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Weather conditions also play a role in pollen levels. Pollen sticks around in moderate temperatures with low humidity and a gentle breeze. Rain washes pollen away. Pollen is carried by the wind, so a still day will typically have lower pollen levels.

Control your immediate environment.

If you know the exact tree, grass, and weed pollens that affect you, you can try to remove them and replant more tolerable types. But remember that airborne pollens can travel hundreds of miles from where they originated.

If you can get someone else to mow the lawn or hire it out, do so. It stirs up pollens. Avoid sitting outdoors around freshly cut grass.

Dry your clothes in a clothes dryer, not on an outdoor line.

Pollen can collect easily on clothing or bed linens left outside.