

## Artificial Sweeteners

People often have to make decisions that may affect their health such as deciding whether to eat foods or drink beverages that contain artificial sweeteners. There have been conflicting reports about the safety of these additives. For example, some studies have indicated that even in small amounts, artificial sweeteners (such as Nutrasweet) can cause health problems, making foods containing them unsafe to eat. Other studies, however, have indicated that even in large amounts, artificial sweeteners do not cause health problems, and that the foods containing them are safe to eat.

1. Please indicate your personal opinion on this issue: I think that artificial sweeteners:

Are not safe for people to eat

I do not know/cannot decide

Are safe for people to eat

2. How is it possible that researchers in the same field disagree about whether a particular artificial sweetener is harmful? (Please write your answer on the lines provided.)

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3. Many people have heard about disagreements among researchers about this, and they suggest different reasons why that might happen. How similar is each of the following reasons to your own understanding of why researchers disagree? (Darken the Appropriate Circle.)

*VS= Very Similar, S= Similar, D= Dissimilar, VD= Very Dissimilar, M= Meaningless*

- VS S D VD M A. Researchers who are honest will not disagree about whether a particular artificial sweetener is harmful.
- VS S D VD M B. Researchers disagree about this issue because, like everyone else, they are confused about the safety of artificial sweeteners. Therefore it is my perspective that what they conclude is just their opinion.
- VS S D VD M C. Researchers disagree whether enough studies have been done that show artificial sweeteners are safe or that these chemicals are not safe.
- VS S D VD M D. Researchers disagree because of the different ways they were brought up and/or the different schools they attended.
- VS S D VD M E. Researchers disagree because they approach the issue with different opinions already in mind about whether additives are safe. As a result, they conduct studies to support their view.
- VS S D VD M F. Researchers arrive at different conclusions because the evidence itself is complex and they examine it from several perspectives. They arrive at a decision by synthesizing their knowledge, experiences, and expert opinions.
- VS S D VD M G. Researchers might say that one view about the safety of a sweetener was better, but they would also say that this viewpoint is relative to a particular way of understanding this issue.
- VS S D VD M H. Researchers disagree because the premeditated hard evidence is synthesized into available belief systems about different comprehensive factual analyses.
- VS S D VD M I. Researchers disagree because they are really studying different facets of the issue and the best ways to address one facet of the issue are different than the best ways to address other facets.
- VS S D VD M J. Researchers disagree because their evaluation of the evidence leads them to defend different conclusions. Some researchers conclusions are more reasonable, however, and reflect a more comprehensive synthesis of the available information.

4. Please rank the statements above (A, B, C., etc.) that are most similar to your thinking. Please check only one statement per line. If no statement beyond one or two is at all like your thinking, check the box labeled "None of These" on the appropriate line(s).

Statement A B C D E F G H I J is most like how I think.

Statement A B C D E F G H I J None of These is second most like how I think.

Statement A B C D E F G H I J None of These is third most like how I think.