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SCIENTISTS DISCOVER SUGAR SUBSTITUTE

DAYTON, Ohio, March 22, 1982 -- At the University of Dayton, two research scientists, Ival Salyer and Arthur Usmani, have prepared a sugar substitute that may allow consumers to have their sugar and eat it, too, because their substitute is pure sugar, minus the conventional problems.

Sugar, as an essential carbohydrate, preservative, and sweetener, has been a major source of concern to doctors and diabetics for years. Organic acids generated by sugars which remain in the mouth promote tooth decay; metabolic reactions in some children may produce uncontrollable behavior; and diabetics are often compelled to forego taste in order to preserve their health.

Although various replacements for ordinary cane sugar have been developed and marketed in recent years, none is completely satisfactory, substituting instead a bitter after-taste and threat to personal health. Cyclamates have been banned, and the possible carcinogenic effects of saccharin have also been called into question.

By linking a sugar molecule to a substance of a higher molecular weight via chemical modification, Salyer and Usmani have created a "polysugar" which retains the taste and sweetness of sugar; cannot be readily broken down by digestive agents in the mouth; and is too large to be transported through the linings of the gastro-intestinal tract, thus preventing absorption into the bloodstream.

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Salyer and Usmani will present their findings at a professional meeting of the American Chemical Society (ACS) on March 30 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Their presentation will highlight the research and its impact.

The scientists note that additional research, including testing on laboratory animals for toxicity or other unknown abnormalities, must still be concluded before recommendations for research leading to commercial marketing can be undertaken.

The ACS is one of the largest scientific conferences in the country. More than 10,000 scientists are expected to attend this 183rd national meeting.

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