Use Splenda® wisely in home-canned food

Splenda® does not have the ability to preserve food like sugar. In large concentrations, (think jelly), sugar has the ability to control bacteria and help preserve food. Splenda® does not have the same effect of helping making food safe when canned.

Canning Fruits. It is safe to use Splenda® to sweeten the water used to cover fruits when canning. However, expect the texture and color of canned fruit to be different. Fruit canned in a heavy syrup results in a firm, plump product. In contrast, fruit canned with Splenda® will be softer and less firm, with a slightly different taste. Process according to current recommended processing times for fruit.

Use about half as much Splenda® as sugar. For example, a medium syrup uses 2-¼ cups sugar dissolved in 5-¼ cups water. Use 1 to 1-¼ cups Splenda® per 5-¼ cups water.

Preserves and Pickled Fruits. Do not use Splenda® in fruit preserves or pickled fruit where sugar is needed to preserve the fruit for safety.

Splenda® cannot be used in traditional Southern preserves. These are whole or uniform pieces of fruit in a very thick sugar syrup, usually made with figs, peaches or pears. Since these preserves do not use pectin gel products, they depend on sugar to make the product safe. Without that heavy amount of sugar, these products become fruit pieces canned in water and should be canned according to directions for canned fruit with longer processing times.

Jams and Jellies, or Fruit Spreads. Splenda®, or other sugar substitutes, may be used to make jam or jelly only if a no-sugar needed pectin is used. Do not substitute Splenda® for sugar in recipes calling for “regular” liquid and powdered pectins.

Do not use Splenda® in long-boil, or no-pectin-added, jams and jellies intended for room temperature storage as a canned product. Sugar must be used in these products to keep them safe.

For safety, freeze or refrigerate any jams or jellies created using Splenda®, unless a low-methoxyl pectin is used, and directions are followed exactly.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation, June 2009