

Artificial Sweeteners in Soft Drinks in Australia – an ECG report (Aug 09)

The two largest [soft drinks](#) producers in Australia, Coca-Cola Amatil and Schweppes Australia, use artificial sweeteners 950 (Ace K) and 951 (aspartame) in all of their diet soft drinks. Neither company put any artificial sweeteners into their non-diet soft drinks.

Due to its bitter aftertaste, Ace K is almost always used in conjunction with another sweetener, such as aspartame. This combination is very common, particularly in diet soft drinks.

Australian owned P&N Beverages use 951, 952 and 955 in their diet cola drink, LA Maxi Ice. While their Diet Rite and Waterfords soft drinks contain 950, 952 and 955.

However **P&N use 961 (neotame) in all of their NON-DIET soft drinks, except LA Ice.** No other soft drink producer in Australia puts artificial sweeteners in their non-diet drinks.

There are concerns about the safety of all artificial sweeteners, but aspartame has probably generated the most controversy. Neotame is the “new kid on the block”, and is a variation on aspartame. While products containing aspartame come with a warning label, legislators are yet to turn their attention to neotame, even though it is many times stronger and appears to be more toxic.

Unfortunately this makes it rather difficult to make a clear recommendation, other than avoiding soft drinks all together, particularly the sugar free ones. New Zealand made [Phoenix Organics](#) is a good option, but they are not widely available in supermarkets. All their drinks are organic, GE-free, come in glass bottles, and don't have sugar-free options.

Normally we would recommend P&N's soft drinks, since they're 100% Australian owned. However their use of neotame we find disturbing. From our research, it seems LA Ice (cola) is their only non-diet soft drink without neotame in it.

#	Name	Sweetness rating	Brand names	Previous patent holders	more info
950	Acesulphame K (Ace K)	200x sugar		Hoechst AG (now Nutrinova)	link
951	Aspartame	200x sugar	NutraSweet, Equal	Monsanto, JW Childs	link link
952	Cyclamate	30x sugar	Sucaryl, Sweetex	DuPont, Abbott Laboratories	link
954	Saccharin	200x sugar	Sugarine, Sugarella	Monsanto, JW Childs	link link
955	Sucralose	600x sugar	Splenda	Tate & Lyle	link
961	Neotame	8,000x sugar		Monsanto, JW Childs	link

Company Profiles:

Coca Cola Amatil (AUS): While Coca-Cola Amatil is majority Australian owned, they pay licencing fees to, and are 30% owned by, the Coca-Cola Company (US), which currently has two boycott calls. **Coca-Cola Company (USA)** has received ongoing criticism for murders, kidnappings and torture of union leaders at Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia. Also in India, local communities have been exposed to toxic waste, had their groundwater and soil polluted, and suffered shortages of drinking water, as a direct result of Coke's operations.

Schweppes Australia: Cadbury Schweppes Australia recently spun off its drinks business, Schweppes Australia, selling it to Japanese beer giant, Asahi Breweries for \$1.2 billion.

P&N Beverages: 100% Australian owned drinks company

Golden Circle: recently bought by USA food giant, Heinz.

Phoenix Organics: New Zealand company which makes organic soft drinks

Company	Country of ownership	Non-diet drinks	Diet drinks
Coca Cola Amatil	AUS	none	950, 951
Schweppes Australia (Asahi)	JPN	none	950, 951
P&N Beverages	AUS	961	950 or 951, 952, 955
Golden Circle (Heinz)	USA	none	955