Leyla Weighs In: Agave, Artificial Sweeteners, and the New “Food Noise” Questionnaire

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | May 15, 2026

Nutritionist Leyla Muedin discusses a listener question about whether agave nectar can contribute to obesity like high-fructose corn syrup, arguing that regular use of sweeteners—including agave, honey, monk fruit, stevia, aspartame, sucralose, allulose, and sugar alcohols—can maintain sweet cravings, spike insulin, and contribute to weight-loss plateaus, with added concerns such as microbiome effects, GI upset, and aspartame’s neurotoxicity. She notes insulin’s role in fat storage and blood pressure via sodium retention, and suggests that needing a sweetener in coffee or tea may indicate dependence on sweetness. She then covers a newly developed, validated Food Noise Questionnaire (FNQ) published in Obesity to measure intrusive food-related rumination, highlighting its five Likert-scale items, study sample characteristics, and the need for further research, including effects of GLP-1 drugs.