

CakePlay – Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Do you teach classes?** Answer: Yes. Please e-mail info@cakeplay.com for more information and availability. (Note: We usually work with Peg Tucker, of School of Cakeology (www.schoolofcakeology.com), for demonstrations. Peggy offers isomalt classes, and often offers classes in conjunction with CakePlay demonstrations.)
- 2. Can CakePlay's Isomalt Sticks be used in pulled and blown sugar projects?** Answer: Yes. Professional cake artists have successfully used our product in various pulled and blown sugar pieces with no problems. Our isomalt contains no acid, but cake professionals have found it to have the pliability needed for their projects.
- 3. Is isomalt safe to eat?** Answer: Yes. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has reviewed isomalt and declared it GRAS, or Generally Regarded as Safe. That designation means the substance has been approved by the FDA for its intended use as a food additive, similar to baking soda, sugar and corn syrup. Isomalt is made from sugar, tastes like sugar and has half the calories of sugar. It does not cause dental cavities and is the most popular sweetener in the world, behind sucrose/sugar. Isomalt has a low glycemic response, and therefore is used in many dietetic candies. Just like many high-fiber foods, the consumption of isomalt in moderate amounts is well-tolerated by most people. The manufacturer recommends ingesting no more than 50 grams of isomalt a day to avoid a laxative effect. Further studies indicate that isomalt is well-tolerated within a normal diet.
- 4. Can CakePlay's isomalt sticks be used in chandelier or pearl (bead) molds?** Answer: Yes. The recommended technique is to pour the melted isomalt when it's fairly thin and hot. Before pouring, wait a minute so any bubbles settle, then fill your desired mold. Fishing line generally works as the "string" when isomalt is poured into bead molds. Then use a toothpick or the edge of a gumpaste tool to fill in the corners of the mold as needed. Remove any excess with a craft knife, or melt away excess with a crème brulee torch or lighter after removing from the mold. To eliminate fingerprints on the molded piece, stretch the mold away from the isomalt, then pop your molded item onto a Silpat® mat. Place your finished piece immediately into an airtight container until just before the cake is displayed. For hanging beads, try pouring every other cavity.
- 5. How long do I melt CakePlay's isomalt sticks in the microwave?** Answer: Since microwave ovens vary in wattage, we don't indicate a specific amount of melting time on our package. Most decorators have success in melting 1-2 broken sticks in an ovenproof bowl or measuring cup for 45 seconds. After that, you can stir the isomalt and keep melting in 15-second increments until the isomalt is the desired consistency. Allow any bubbles to subside before pouring into your desired mold or proceeding with any other decorating technique.
- 6. Can I use your isomalt sticks in a glue gun?** Answer: CakePlay does not recommend placing its isomalt sticks in a glue gun. To our knowledge, no food-safe glue gun is on the market at this time. Our best recommendation is to melt the desired number of isomalt sticks in a Pyrex bowl or other ovenproof container. Melted isomalt is extremely hot. During any decorating project, be sure to wear heatproof gloves and long sleeves to protect your skin. Keep a bowl of cold water nearby to immerse your hands in case of accidental contact. Do not use around children or in a high-traffic area. Go to www.cakeplay.com for more safety tips and information.
- 7. Can CakePlay's isomalt sticks be tinted to another color?** Answer: Yes. CakePlay has had good success with gel colors, especially since they impart less moisture to the product. Just touch the tip of a popsicle stick to your desired gel color. Then touch that tip of the popsicle stick to the hot isomalt right after it comes out of the microwave. Let the moisture sizzle off before stirring in the gel color. For a fun "swirled" look, don't stir the gel color in completely.
- 8. Can I flavor the isomalt?** Answer: Flavoring oils may be added to isomalt as desired. However, some flavoring oils impart a color to the product, and may contain fine particulates that can detract from the clarity of the isomalt. We recommend testing your flavoring with a small amount of isomalt and observing the results before proceeding with candy production.

9. Will my melted isomalt have a cloudy appearance? Answer: CakePlay's isomalt sticks are very clear. However, the substrate or mold used to cast the isomalt can give it a cloudy appearance, depending on the mold's surface and/or density. Typically, a mold with a tighter structure will give better results. One technique to try for improved clarity is to rub a little vegetable oil onto the mold, then wipe it off before pouring the melted isomalt in. You can also use a crème brûlée torch to restore surface clarity.

10. When do I put finished pieces on a cake? Answer: CakePlay recommends placing finished isomalt pieces into an air-tight container until just before displaying your cake. If you live in a high-humidity environment, you may want to add a desiccant to the container with your finished piece. CakePlay has desiccant packets available in our online store. Do not refrigerate finished pieces.

11. Will CakePlay's isomalt sticks work in a high-humidity environment? Answer: Isomalt works much better than sugar in areas of high humidity, but will still absorb moisture, although more slowly, and will not crystallize. However, cake artists and pastry decorators will want to take some precautions when working with our product: (A) Immediately after finishing a sugar showpiece, store it in an airtight container with a desiccant such as silica gel. Do not remove the piece from the container until just before displaying. (B) Unused isomalt sticks can be stored in an airtight container away from light and heat for up to 2 years. (C) Leftover melted isomalt can be poured onto a Silpat mat, cooled and stored. Those in high-humidity environments can also protect their finished creations with an edible lacquer spray or confectionery glaze. Visit www.cakeplay.com for more ideas and suggestions.

12. Can I burn isomalt? Yes, but only with significant overheating. This is why we recommend adding time to the microwave in small increments. When melted properly, isomalt can be heated multiple times. Typically, the color breaks down long before the isomalt, and you should be able to heat the product a few times without detrimental effects.

13. My molded piece looks cloudy. What should I do? There are a number of factors which may be causing the cloudiness in your finished piece: (A) If you're using a silicone mold (or some silicone mats), the silicone may not have been cured properly during manufacture. Only use top-quality molds. (B) Excess humidity in your area and/or preparation location can cause cloudiness. Use desiccant packets when you store your finished pieces to alleviate this issue. (C) Lightly run the flame from a crème brûlée torch carefully over the mold's surface to remove cloudiness. (D) Lightly rub oil onto the mold's surface, then remove the excess with a clean cloth or paper towel. (E) Do not refrigerate molded pieces. Store in an air-tight container until just before display.

14. My melted isomalt has bubbles. How can I eliminate this problem? If bubbles occur along the surface of the isomalt next to the mold and are quite small, the mold is the problem. The type of mold and quality of mold can affect the end results. Silicone molds give the best detail, but depending on the material and cure rate, can cause small bubbles on the surface. These can be removed with a minor loss of detail with the careful use of a crème brûlée torch. Another approach some people find helpful is to run a small amount of oil into the mold before pouring in the isomalt, to create a barrier between the two materials.

Be sure to let melted isomalt stand for some time after microwaving for bubbles to dissipate. If the bubbles are truly in the center of the mold, this is the most likely culprit. Watch through the window in your microwave to avoid heating the product longer than necessary, thereby forming excess bubbles. This is especially true if you are microwaving a small amount of isomalt.

A good pouring spout helps to eliminate some bubbles as they stretch and break as the isomalt is poured into a mold. Also, after pouring, if there are small bubbles on the surface of the poured isomalt in the mold, and your mold is heat-proof, these bubbles can also be eliminated with use of a crème brûlée torch while the isomalt is still liquid. Be careful not to heat the isomalt to the boiling point again with the torch – a light touch is all that is needed.