

How Does Aspartame Damage Your Brain?

Consuming a lot of aspartame may inhibit the ability of enzymes in your brain to function normally, according to a new review by scientists from the University of Pretoria and the University of Limpopo.

The review found that high doses of the sweetener may lead to neurodegeneration. It has also previously been found that aspartame consumption can cause neurological and behavioral disturbances in sensitive individuals.

Specifically, the review found a number of direct and indirect changes that occur in your brain as a result of high consumption levels of aspartame, including disturbing:

- The metabolism of amino acids
- Protein structure and metabolism
- The integrity of nucleic acids
- Neuronal function
- Endocrine balances
- Further, the breakdown of aspartame causes nerves to fire excessively, which can indirectly lead to a high rate of neuron depolarisation.

Despite these growing concerns, neither the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have changed their guidelines regarding the safety of the ingredient or intake advice.

Sources:

Food Quality News April 6, 2008

European Journal of Clinical Nutrition 2008, 62, 451–462

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Aspartame is a poison that does not belong in your body, and this is not an exaggeration. Yet, this toxic substance is consumed by over 200 million people around the world and is found in more than 6,000 products.

Everything from soda and chewing gum to desserts, yogurt, and even some vitamins and cough drops contain it. When you drink, say, a can of diet soda sweetened with aspartame, what are you REALLY consuming? Here's a breakdown of aspartame's three chemicals: the amino acids aspartic acid and phenylalanine, and methanol.

1. Aspartic acid (40 percent of aspartame)

The neural cell damage that can be caused by excessive aspartate is why Dr. Russell Blaylock refers to them as "excitotoxins." They "excite" or stimulate your neural cells to death.

Your brain cells could be dying right now, but you likely would not notice the symptoms until 75 percent or more are gone. Then, chronic illnesses such as the following, which may be caused by long-term exposure to excitatory amino acid damage, may occur:

- Multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease
- Memory and hearing loss
- Hormonal problems
- Epilepsy
- AIDS
- Brain lesions
- Neuroendocrine disorders

2. Phenylalanine (50 percent of aspartame)

Excessive levels of phenylalanine in your brain can cause the levels of serotonin in your brain to decrease, leading to emotional disorders such as depression. It can also cause schizophrenia or make you more susceptible to seizures.

3. Methanol (aka wood alcohol) (10 percent of aspartame)

Methanol/wood alcohol is a deadly poison, and the absorption of methanol into your body is sped up considerably when free methanol is ingested. Well, free methanol is created from aspartame when it is heated to above 86 degrees Fahrenheit (30 Centigrade). This would occur when an aspartame-containing product is improperly stored (in the sun, for instance) or when it is heated, such as part of a "food" product like Jello. Meanwhile, methanol breaks down into formic acid and formaldehyde -- a deadly neurotoxin -- in your body.

Even the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that methanol "is considered a cumulative poison due to the low rate of excretion once it is absorbed. In the body, methanol is oxidized to formaldehyde and formic acid; both of these metabolites are toxic."

They recommend a limit of consumption of 7.8 mg/day, but a one-liter aspartame-sweetened beverage contains about 56 mg of methanol. Heavy users of aspartame-containing products consume as much as 250 mg of methanol daily -- or 32 times the EPA limit!

The symptoms of methanol poisoning are numerous and varied. They include:

Vision problems

Headaches, ear buzzing, dizziness

Nausea and gastrointestinal disturbances

Weakness, numbness and shooting pains in your extremities

Behavioral disturbances

Memory lapses

Do You STILL Believe Aspartame is Safe?

I could literally go on for days about the many problems plaguing this artificial sweetener; both the dangers it poses to your health and the blatant greed and manipulation that got it on the market.

That is why I spent years researching and writing *Sweet Deception*. It is the most comprehensive book on the market addressing this issue, and if you or your loved ones drink diet beverages or eat diet foods, please read it sooner rather than later.

I also highly recommend watching *Sweet Misery*, which is part documentary, part detective story that sheds much-needed light on the controversy surrounding aspartame.

Folks, aspartame is not your friend. It is actually responsible for 80-85 percent of the food complaints registered with the FDA!

Aside from the damage it can do to your brain, aspartame can cause cancer. One well-controlled, peer-reviewed, SEVEN-year study even found that as little as 20 mg per day can cause cancer in humans.

One 12-ounce diet soda contains about 180 mg of aspartame, so you do the math on that risk!

If you have NutraSweet or Equal packets in your home, I urge you to get rid of them. About the only good use for them I've heard about is using them to kill ants in your kitchen.

And if you're consuming diet foods or drinks of any kind, toss those as well. Your health will be much better off for it.