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A Deadly Sweetner

Aspartame producer Ajinomoto is launching a new initiative that will rebrand the sweetener as “AminoSweet”.

Aspartame is used in many foods and beverages marketed as low calorie or sugar-free. However, its reputation has been clouded somewhat by studies that have investigated reports of ill effects.

Just to remind you, the side effects of aspartame can include:

- Headache
- Change in vision
- Convulsions and seizures
- Hallucination
- Nausea and vomiting
- Joint pain

It can cause many, many other problems as well.

Sources:

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Aspartame is the most controversial food additive in history, and its approval for use in food was the most contested in FDA history. In the end, the artificial sweetener was approved, not on scientific grounds, but rather because of [strong political and financial pressure](#). After all, aspartame was previously listed by the Pentagon as a biochemical warfare agent!

It's hard to believe such a chemical would be allowed into the food supply, but it was, and it has been wreaking silent havoc with people's health for the past 30 years.

The truth is, it should never have been released onto the market, and allowing it to remain in the food chain is seriously hurting people – no matter how many times you rebrand it under fancy new names.

The Deceptive Marketing of Aspartame

Sold commercially under names like NutraSweet, Canderel, and now AminoSweet, aspartame can be found in more than 6,000 foods, including soft drinks, chewing gum, table-top sweeteners, diet and diabetic foods, breakfast cereals, jams, sweets, vitamins, prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Aspartame producer Ajinomoto chose to rebrand it under the name AminoSweet, to “remind the industry that aspartame tastes just like sugar, and that it's made from amino acids – the building blocks of protein that are abundant in our diet.”

This is deception at its finest: Begin with a shred of truth, and then spin it to fit your own agenda. In this case, the agenda is to make you believe that aspartame is somehow a harmless, natural sweetener made with two amino acids that are essential for health and present in your diet already. They want you to believe aspartame delivers all the benefits of sugar and none of its drawbacks. But nothing could be further from the truth.

How Aspartame Wreaks Havoc on Your Health

Did you know there have been more reports to the FDA for aspartame reactions than for all other food additives combined?

In fact, there are over 10,000 official complaints, but by the FDA's own admission, less than 1 percent of those who experience a reaction to a product ever report it. So in all likelihood, the toxic effects of aspartame may have affected roughly a million people already.

While a variety of symptoms have been reported, almost two-thirds of them fall into the neurological and behavioral category consisting mostly of headaches, mood alterations, and hallucinations. The remaining third is mostly gastrointestinal symptoms.

This [video](#) will familiarize you with some of the terrifying side-effects and health problems you could encounter if you consume products containing this chemical.

Unfortunately, aspartame toxicity is not well-known by doctors, despite its frequency. Diagnosis is also hampered by the fact that it mimics several other common health conditions, such as:

Multiple sclerosis	Parkinson's disease
Alzheimer's disease	Fibromyalgia
Arthritis	Multiple chemical sensitivity
Chronic fatigue syndrome	Attention deficit disorder
Panic disorder	Depression and other psychological disorders
Lupus	Diabetes and diabetic complications
Birth defects	Lymphoma
Lyme disease	Hypothyroidism

How Diet Foods and Drinks CAUSE Weight Problems

In recent years, food manufacturers have increasingly focused on developing low-calorie foods and drinks to help you maintain a healthy weight and avoid obesity. Unfortunately, the science behind these products is so flawed, most of these products can actually [lead to increased weight gain!](#)

For example, researchers have discovered that drinking [diet soda increases your risk of metabolic syndrome](#), and may [double your risk of obesity](#) – the complete opposite of the stated intention behind these “zero calorie” drinks.

The sad truth is that diet foods and drinks [ruin your body's ability to count calories](#), and in fact [stimulate your appetite](#), thus boosting your inclination to overindulge.

Unfortunately, most public health agencies and nutritionists in the United States recommend these toxic artificial sweeteners as an acceptable alternative to sugar, which is at best confusing and at worst harming the health of those who take their misguided advice.

Even More Toxic Dangers of Aspartame

Truly, there is enough evidence showing the dangers of consuming artificial sweeteners to fill an entire book -- which is exactly why I wrote [Sweet Deception](#). If you or your loved ones drink diet beverages or eat diet foods, this book will explain how you've been deceived about the truth behind artificial sweeteners like aspartame and sucralose -- for greed, for profits, and at the expense of your health.

As mentioned earlier, almost two-thirds of all documented side effects of aspartame consumption are neurological.

One of the reasons for this side effect, researchers have discovered, is because the phenylalanine in aspartame dissociates from the ester bond. While these amino acids are indeed completely natural and safe, they were never designed to be ingested as isolated amino acids in massive quantities, which in and of itself will cause complications.

Additionally this will also increase dopamine levels in your brain. This can lead to symptoms of depression because it distorts your serotonin/dopamine balance. It can also lead to migraine headaches and brain tumors through a similar mechanism.

The aspartic acid in aspartame is a well-documented [excitotoxin](#). Excitotoxins are usually amino acids, such as glutamate and aspartate. These special amino acids cause particular brain cells to become excessively excited, to the point that they die.

Excitotoxins can also cause a loss of brain synapses and connecting fibers. A review conducted in 2008 by scientists from the University of Pretoria and the University of Limpopo found that consuming a lot of aspartame may inhibit the ability of enzymes in your brain to function normally, and may lead to neurodegeneration.

According to the researchers, consuming a lot of aspartame can disturb:

- The metabolism of amino acids
- Protein structure and metabolism
- The integrity of nucleic acids
- Neuronal function
- Endocrine balances

Furthermore, the ester bond in aspartame breaks down to formaldehyde and methanol, which are also toxic in their own right. So it is not surprising that this popular artificial sweetener has also been [found to cause cancer](#).

One truly [compelling case study](#) that shows this all too well was done by a private citizen named Victoria Inness-Brown. She decided to perform [her own aspartame experiment](#) on 108 rats over a period of 2 years and 8 months.

Daily, she fed some of the rats the equivalent (for their body weight) of two-thirds the aspartame contained in 8-oz of diet soda. Thirty-seven percent of the females fed aspartame developed tumors, some of massive size.

How to Ditch Artificial Sweeteners, and Sate Your Sweet Tooth

If you suffer from sweet cravings, it's easy to convince yourself you're doing the right thing by opting for a zero-calorie sweetener like aspartame. Please understand that you will do more harm than good to your body this way.

First, it's important to realize that your body craves sweets when you're not giving it the proper fuel it needs.

Finding out your [nutritional type](#) will tell you exactly which foods you need to eat to feel full and satisfied. It may sound hard to believe right now, but once you start eating right for your nutritional type, your sweet cravings will significantly lessen and may even disappear.

Meanwhile, be sure you address the emotional component to your food cravings using a tool such as the [Meridian Tapping Technique \(MTT\)](#). More than any traditional or alternative method I have used or researched, MTT works to overcome food cravings and helps you reach dietary success.

And, if diet soda is the culprit for you, be sure to check out [Turbo Tapping](#), which is an extremely effective and simple tool to get rid of your soda addiction in a short period of time.

Non-Acceptable Alternative Sweeteners

I have written a few articles on [fructose](#) earlier this year, and I will be writing many more, so please be aware that I am absolutely convinced that fructose ingestion is at the core of our obesity epidemic.

And I'm not only talking about high fructose corn syrup, which is virtually identical to table sugar. The only major difference between the two is HFCS is much cheaper so it has contributed to massive increase in fructose ingestion, far beyond safe or healthy.

Please understand you need to keep your fructose levels BELOW 25 grams per day. The best way to do that is to avoid these "natural" sweeteners as they are loaded with a much higher percentage of fructose than HFCS.

- Fruit Juice
- Agave
- Honey

Please note that avoiding these beyond 25 grams per day is crucial, even if the source is fresh, raw, and organic. It just doesn't matter, fructose is fructose is fructose...

Acceptable Alternative Sweeteners

For those times when you just want a taste of something sweet, your healthiest alternative is [Stevia](#). It's a natural plant and, unlike aspartame and other artificial sweeteners that have been cited for dangerous toxicities, it is a safe, natural alternative that's ideal if you're watching your weight, or if you're maintaining your health by avoiding sugar.

It is hundreds of times sweeter than sugar and truly has virtually no calories.

I must tell you that I am biased; I prefer Stevia as my sweetener of choice, and I frequently use it. However, like most choices, especially sweeteners, I recommend using Stevia in moderation, just like sugar. In excess it is still far less likely to cause metabolic problems than sugar or any of the artificial sweeteners.

I want to emphasize, that if you have insulin issues, I suggest that you avoid sweeteners altogether, including Stevia, as they all can decrease your sensitivity to insulin.

Lo han is another sweetener like Stevia. It's an African sweet herb that can also be used, but it's a bit more expensive and harder to find.

So if you struggle with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or extra weight, then you have insulin sensitivity issues and would benefit from avoiding ALL sweeteners.

But for everyone else, if you are going to sweeten your foods and beverages anyway, I strongly encourage you to consider using regular Stevia or Lo han, and toss out all artificial sweeteners and any products that contain them.

If you have experienced an adverse reaction to any aspartame product, [call the FDA Consumer Complaint Coordinator](#) in your area.