

ASPARTAME: JUST THE FACTS PLEASE

Aspartame is a low-calorie sweetener that is used to sweeten a variety of foods and beverages. Aspartame is about 200 times sweeter than sugar therefore very little is needed to achieve satisfactory sweetening levels. Consequently, the calories in foods can be substantially reduced, and in many products virtually eliminated, by using aspartame in place of sugar.

The safety of aspartame has been affirmed not only by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration), but also by leading health groups including the World Health Organization and the American Medical Association. Over 200 scientific studies conducted by researchers at universities and health organizations throughout the world have established its safety.

For additional information regarding the safety of aspartame, refer to the following website addresses.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY (ACS)

www.cancer.org/docroot/ped/content/ped_1_3X_aspartame.asp

The ACS is a nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service.

"Since aspartame is broken down into these components [aspartic acid, phenylalanine and methanol, which occur naturally in larger quantities in many other foods] before it is absorbed into the blood stream, aspartame in its initial form

does not have the opportunity to travel to target organs, including the brain, to cause cancer."

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH (ACSH)

www.acsh.org/press/editorials/HealthHoax012899.html

The ACSH is a consumer education consortium concerned with issues related to food, nutrition, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, lifestyle, the environment and health. This organization was created to add reason and balance to debates about public health issues and bring common sense views to the public.

ACSH has received many inquiries "regarding one such health hoax about aspartame." "This article is packed with misinformation that could frighten those, such as diabetics, who rely on aspartame. In fact aspartame is safe. Aspartame is one of the most thoroughly tested substances in the U.S. food supply."

AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION (ADA)

www.eatright.org/adap0598.html

The ADA is the largest organization of food and nutrition professionals (nearly 70,000 members) and its mission is to promote optimal nutrition and well-being for all people by advocating for its members.

"It is the position of The American Dietetic Association that consumers can safely enjoy a range of nutritive and non-nutritive sweeteners (including aspartame) when consumed in moderation and within the context of a diet consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans."

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION (AHA)

216.185.112.5/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4447

The AHA's mission is to reduce disability and death from cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

"Extensive investigation so far hasn't shown any serious side effects from aspartame."

ASTHMA AND ALLERGY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA (AAFA)

www.aafa.org/templ/display.cfm?id=222

The AAFA is dedicated to helping those with asthma and allergies and their caregivers improve their quality of life through education, advocacy and research.

"Most reported reactions have not been verified. Some claim that products containing aspartame cause hyperactivity in children but study results do not support these claims."

CALORIE CONTROL COUNCIL (CCC)

www.caloriecontrol.org/aspartame.html

The CCC is an international non-profit association representing the low-calorie, reduced fat food and beverage industry and assures that pertinent scientific and medical research is developed and made available to everyone.

"FDA and almost all scientists who are familiar with the data conclude that aspartame, and its use in a wide variety of products, is a safe and useful option for those individuals who prefer a low-calorie sweetener. Aspartame has been extensively studied in animals and humans for more than two decades in more than 200 studies. Few compounds have withstood

such detailed testing and repeated, close scrutiny, and the process through which aspartame has gone should provide the public with additional confidence of its safety."

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00000426.htm

The CDC is recognized as the lead federal agency for protecting the health and safety of people – at home and abroad, providing credible information to enhance health decisions, and promoting health through strong partnerships.

"Although it may be that certain individuals have an unusual sensitivity to the product [aspartame], these data do not provide evidence for the existence of serious, widespread, adverse health consequences attendant to the use of aspartame."

INTERNATIONAL FOOD INFORMATION COUNCIL FOUNDATION (IFIC)

<http://www.ific.org/proactive/newsroom/release.vtml?id=17768>

IFIC's mission is to communicate science-based information on food safety and nutrition to health and nutrition professionals, educators, journalists, government officials and others providing information to consumers.

"Prior to its approval, aspartame underwent one of the most thorough scientific reviews ever conducted. Regulators consider it one of the most widely tested ingredients in the food supply. The safety of aspartame has been affirmed by the FDA and leading independent health groups such as the American Medical Association." "A task force of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on Nutrition concluded that

aspartame is safe for both the mother and developing baby. Of course, it is important for all pregnant women to consult with their doctors regarding nutritional needs during pregnancy."

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT)

<http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/tt/1998/sep16/aspartame.html>

The mission of MIT is to advance knowledge and educate students in science, technology, and other areas of scholarship that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century.

Paul A. Spiers, a visiting scientist in the Clinical Research Center at MIT, concludes that "aspartame is safe for the general population" and that "daily large doses of aspartame had no adverse effect on study subjects' health and well-being."

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS FOUNDATION (MSF)

www.msfocus.org/aspart.htm

MSF's mission is to ensure the best quality of life for those coping with MS by providing comprehensive support and educational programs.

"The CDC also noted that there was no evidence supporting the claim that aspartame could cause certain diseases (i.e. multiple sclerosis, lupus, etc.)."

U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA)

www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1999/699_sugar.html

The FDA's mission is to promote and protect the public health by helping safe and effective products reach the market in a timely way, and monitoring products for continued safety after they are in use.

"FDA stands behind its original approval of aspartame, and subsequent evaluations have shown that the product is safe."

U.S. FDA'S CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY AND APPLIED NUTRITION

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/qa-adf9.html>

A branch of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the CFSAN promotes and protects the public health and economic interest by ensuring that food is safe, nutritious, and wholesome.

"The FDA has continued to review complaints alleging adverse reactions to products containing aspartame. To date, FDA has not determined any consistent pattern of symptoms that can be attributed to the use of aspartame, nor is the agency aware of any recent studies that clearly show safety problems."

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

http://www.who.int/medicines/library/pnewslet/dmp_pn5697.html

WHO, the United Nations' specialized agency for health, is committed to achieving the highest possible level of health for all people.

WHO states, in a newsletter, "Aspartame – association with brain tumours not supported."

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