

# Greenwich Sentinel

Building a Strong Community Together + April 1, 2016

## Are Artificial Sweeteners Making us Sick?



By Julia Chiappetta  
*Sentinel Columnist*

Sweet things are fun and certainly make us happy, but artificial sweeteners are a completely different topic of conversation.

The main culprit is Aspartame, one of the most common artificial sweeteners in use today and sold under the brand names NutraSweet and Equal.

The chemical formula, C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>18</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>, was accidentally discovered in 1965 by James Schlatter, a chemist from G.D. Searle Company while he was testing an anti-ulcer drug.

Aspartame is used in many foods and beverages because it's approximately 200 times sweeter than sugar. That said, much less is used to achieve higher levels of sweetness while offering lower calories in foods and beverages. However, please stop and think about this for a moment. Could any compound or chemical created in a laboratory ever be better or healthier than something created by nature?

Aspartame, originally approved for dry goods on July 26, 1974, was met with objections by a neuroscience researcher Dr. John W. Olney

and consumer attorney James Turner in August 1974. Simultaneously, there were investigations of G.D. Searle's research practices that caused the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), to put the approval on hold on December 5, 1974.

But, it was still approved for use in dry goods in 1981 and carbonated beverages in 1983. In 1985, Monsanto purchased G.D. Searle and made Searle Pharmaceuticals and The NutraSweet Company separate subsidiaries.

This was an alarming piece of information while doing research for this article, in that my feeling is Monsanto has been at work for decades, slowly infiltrating our food system with bad stuff; namely genetically modified foods or GMO's.

Aspartame accounts for about 75 percent of adverse reactions to food additives as reported to the FDA. Many reactions are serious and may cause seizures or worse. Just some of the 90 documented dangerous symptoms include: rashes, dizziness, vertigo, weight gain, insomnia, nausea, anxiety, heart palpitations, joint pain, depression, asthma, hearing loss and vision problems.

Aspartame is made up of three chemicals: aspartic acid, phenylalanine and methanol. In the book *Prescription for Nutritional Healing*, by James and Phyllis Balch, they refer to aspartame as a "chemical poison." Dr. Russell L. Blaylock, Professor of Neurosurgery at The Medical University of Mississippi, published a book that outlines damage caused by excessive

ingestion of aspartic acid from aspartame, using 500 scientific references that show how excitatory amino acids, such as aspartic acid and glutamic acid, are causing serious chronic neurological disorders and a host of other symptoms.

Aspartate and glutamate act as neurotransmitters in the brain to speed up transmission of information from neuron to neuron. Too much of either in the brain will kill certain neurons and produce too much calcium, which is taken into the cells. The influx of calcium triggers free radicals which will kill the cells. This neural cell damage caused by excessive aspartate and glutamate are called "excitotoxins," because they stimulate the neural cells to death.

There is a higher risk to infants, children, pregnant women and the elderly from excitotoxins. The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), which generally understates problems, aligns with the FDA and recently stated in a review that glutamic acid, should be avoided by women of childbearing age.

Dr. Joseph Mercola cites on his website "one common complaint of persons suffering from the effect of aspartame is memory loss. Ironically, in 1987, G.D. Searle, the manufacturer of aspartame, undertook a search for a drug to combat memory loss caused by excitatory amino acid damage. Blaylock is one of many scientists and physicians who are concerned about excitatory amino acid damage caused by ingestion of aspartame and MSG.

A few of the many experts who have spoken out against the damage being caused by aspartate and glutamate include Adrienne Samuels, Ph.D., an experimental psychologist specializing in research design. Another is Dr. John Olney, a professor in the department of psychiatry, School of Medicine, Washington University, a neuroscientist and researcher, and one of the world's foremost authorities on excitotoxins, informed Searle in 1971 that aspartic acid caused holes in the brains of mice."

In summary, Aspartame, the zero-calorie sugar substitute that has been under scrutiny for years but the FDA maintains that it is safe and we can rely on their testing, however consumer advocate groups and a number of animal studies says otherwise, citing reports of both mild and potentially dangerous side effects.

Being our own health advocates is a good thing. Be informed, read labels, question ingredients and be good to your body. I say.....let's invite more sweet people in our lives and less artificial sweeteners!

**References:** <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2011/11/06/aspartame-most-dangerous-substance-added-to-food.aspx>

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/othercarcinogens/athome/aspartame>

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/22810-dangers-aspartame/>

*Julia Chiappetta is the author of "Breast Cancer: The Notebook" (Gemini Media, 2006) and is also the owner of Julia Chiappetta Consulting.*