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The Bitter Truth about Aspartame

Aspartame sugar substitutes cause worrying symptoms from memory loss to brain tumours. But despite US FDA approval as a 'safe' food additive, aspartame is one of the most dangerous substances ever to be foisted upon an unsuspecting public.

Extracted from Nexus Magazine

Aspartame is the technical name for the brand names, NutraSweet, Equal, Spoonful, and Equal-Measure. Aspartame was discovered by accident in 1965, when James Schlatter, a chemist of G.D. Searle Company was testing an anti-ulcer drug. Aspartame was approved for dry goods in 1981 and for carbonated beverages in 1983. It was originally approved for dry goods on July 26, 1974, but objections filed by neuroscience researcher Dr John W. Olney and Consumer attorney James Turner in August 1974 as well as investigations of G.D. Searle's research practices caused the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to put approval of aspartame on hold (December 5, 1974). In 1985, Monsanto purchased G.D. Searle and made Searle Pharmaceuticals and The NutraSweet Company separate subsidiaries.

Aspartame is, by far, the most dangerous substance on the market that is added to foods. Aspartame accounts for over 75 percent of the adverse reactions to food additives reported to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Many of these reactions are very serious including seizures and death as recently disclosed in a February 1994 Department of Health and Human Services report. (1) A few of the 90 different documented symptoms listed in the report as being caused by aspartame include:

Headaches/migraines, dizziness, seizures, nausea, numbness, muscle spasms, weight gain, rashes, depression, fatigue, irritability, tachycardia, insomnia, vision problems, hearing loss, heart palpitations, breathing difficulties, anxiety attacks, slurred speech, loss of taste, tinnitus, vertigo, memory loss, and joint pain.

According to researchers and physicians studying the adverse effects

of aspartame, the following chronic illnesses can be triggered or worsened by ingesting of aspartame: (2)

Brain tumors, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, chronic fatigue syndrome, parkinson's disease, alzheimer's, mental retardation, lymphoma, birth defects, fibromyalgia, and diabetes.

Aspartame is made up of three chemicals: Aspartic acid, phenylalanine, and methanol. The book, Prescription for Nutritional Healing, by James and Phyllis Balch, lists aspartame under the category of "chemical poison." As you shall see, that is exactly what it is.

ASPARTIC ACID (40% OF ASPARTAME)

Dr Russell L. Blaylock, a professor of Neurosurgery at the Medical University of Mississippi, recently published a book thoroughly detailing the damage that is caused by the ingestion of excessive aspartic acid from aspartame. [Ninety nine percent of monosodium glutamate (MSG) is glutamic acid. The damage it causes is also documented in Blaylock's book.] Blaylock makes use of almost 500 scientific references to show how excess free excitatory amino acids such as aspartic acid and glutamic acid in our food supply are causing serious chronic neurological disorders and a myriad of other acute symptoms. (3)

SUMMARY OF HOW ASPARTATE (AND GLUTAMATE) CAUSE DAMAGE

Aspartate and glutamate act as neurotransmitters in the brain by facilitating the transmission of information from neuron to neuron. Too much aspartate or glutamate in the brain kills certain neurons by allowing the influx of too much calcium into the cells. This influx triggers excessive amounts of free radicals which kill the cells. The neural cell damage that can be caused by excessive aspartate and glutamate is why they are referred to as "excitotoxins." They "excite" or stimulate the neural cells to death.

Aspartic acid is an amino acid. Taken in its free form (unbound to proteins) it significantly raises the blood plasma level of aspartate and glutamate. The excess aspartate and glutamate in the blood plasma shortly after ingesting aspartame or products with free glutamic acid (glutamate precursor) leads to a high level of those neurotransmitters in certain areas of the brain.

The blood brain barrier (BBB) which normally protects the brain from excess glutamate and aspartate as well as toxins (1) is not fully

developed during childhood, 2) does not fully protect all areas of the brain, 3) is damaged by numerous chronic and acute conditions, and 4) allows seepage of excess glutamate and aspartate into the brain even when intact.

The excess glutamate and aspartate slowly begin to destroy neurons. The large majority (75%+) of neural cells in a particular area of the brain are killed before any clinical symptoms of a chronic illness are noticed. A few of the many chronic illnesses that have been shown to be contributed to by long-term exposure excitatory amino acid damage include:

Multiple sclerosis (MS), ALS, memory loss, hormonal problems, hearing loss, epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, hypoglycemia, AIDS dementia, brain lesions, and neuroendocrine disorders.

The risk to infants, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with certain chronic health problems from excitotoxins are great. Even the Federation of American Societies For Experimental Biology (FASEB), which usually understates problems and mimicks the FDA party-line, recently stated in a review that "it is prudent to avoid the use of dietary supplements of L-glutamic acid by pregnant women, infants, and children. The Existence of evidence of potential endocrine responses, i.e., elevated cortisol and prolactin, and differential responses between males and females, would also suggest a neuroendocrine link and that supplemental L-glutamic acid should be avoided by women of childbearing age and individuals with affective disorders."(4) Aspartic acid from aspartame has the same deleterious effects on the body as glutamic acid.

The exact mechanism of acute reactions to excess free glutamate and aspartate is currently being debated. As reported to the FDA, those reactions include: (5)

Headaches/migraines, nausea, abdominal pains, fatigue (blocks sufficient glucose entry into brain), sleep problems, vision problems, anxiety attacks, depression, and asthma/chest tightness.

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 excititory amino acid damage. Blaylock is one of many scientists and physicians who are concerned about excititory 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 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. (He informed Searle in 1971 that aspartic acid caused holes in the brain of mice.) Also included is Francis J. Waickman, M.D., a recipient of the Rinkel and Forman Awards, and Board certified in Pediatrics, Allergy, and Immunology.

Other concerned scientists include: John R. Hain, M.D., Board Certified Forensic Pathologist, and H.J. Roberts, M.D., FACP, FCCP, Diabetic Specialist, and selected by a national medical publication as "The Best Doctor in the US"

John Samuels is concerned, also. He compiled a list of scientific research sufficient to show the dangers of ingesting excess free glutamic and aspartic acid.

And there are many more who can be added to this long list.

PHENYLALANINE (50% OF ASPARTAME)

Phenylalanine is an amino acid normally found in the brain. Persons with the genetic disorder, phenylketonuria (PKU) cannot metabolize phenylalanine. This leads to dangerously high levels of phenylalanine in the brain (sometimes lethal). It has been shown that ingesting aspartame, especially along with carbohydrates can lead to excess levels of phenylalanine in the brain even in persons who do not have PKU. This is not just a theory, as many people who have eaten large amounts of aspartame over a long period of time and do not have PKU have been shown to have excessive levels of phenylalanine in the blood. Excessive levels of phenylalanine in the brain can cause the levels of serotonin in the brain to decrease, leading to emotional disorders such as depression. It was shown in human testing that phenylalanine levels of the blood were increased significantly in human subjects who chronically used aspartame.(6) Even a single use of aspartame raised the blood phenylalanine levels. In his testimony before the US Congress, Dr Louis J. Elsas showed that high blood phenylalanine can be concentrated in parts of the brain, and is especially dangerous for infants and fetuses. He also showed that phenylalanine is metabolised much more effeciently by rodents than by humans.(7)

One account of a case of extremely high phenylalanine levels caused by aspartame was recently published in the "Wednesday Journal" in an article entitled "An Aspartame Nightmare." John Cook began drinking 6 to 8 diet drinks every day. His symptoms started out as memory loss and frequent headaches. He began to crave more aspartame-sweetened drinks. His condition deteriorated so much that he experienced wide mood swings and violent rages. Even though he did not suffer from PKU, a blood test revealed a phenylalanine level of 80 mg/dl. He also showed abnormal brain function and brain damage. After he kicked his aspartame habit, his symptoms improved dramatically. (8)

As Blaylock points out in his book, early studies measuring phenylalanine buildup in the brain were flawed. Investigators who measured specific brain regions and not the average throughout the brain notice significant rises in phenylalanine levels. Specifically the hypothalamus, medulla oblongata, and corpus striatum areas of the brain had the largest increases in phenylalanine. Blaylock goes on to point out that excessive buildup of phenylalanine in the brain can cause schizophrenia or make one more susceptible to seizures.

Therefore, long-term, excessive use of aspartame may provide a boost to sales of serotonin reuptake inhibitors such as Prozac and drugs to control schizophrenia and seizures.

METHANOL (AKA WOOD ALCOHOL/POISON) (10% OF ASPARTAME)
Methanol/wood alcohol is a deadly poison. Some people may remember methanol as the poison that has caused some "skid row" alcoholics to end up blind or dead. Methanol is gradually released in the small intestine when the methyl group of aspartame encounters the enzyme chymotrypsin.

The absorption of methanol into the body is sped up considerably when free methanol is ingested. Free methanol is created from aspartame when it is heated to above 86 Fahrenheit (30 Centigrade). This would occur when aspartame-containing product is improperly stored or when it is heated (e.g., as part of a "food" product such as Jello).

Methanol breaks down into formic acid and formaldehyde in the body. Formaldehyde is a deadly neurotoxin. An EPA assessment of methanol 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."

The recommend a limit of consumption of 7.8 mg/day. A one-liter (approx. 1 quart) 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.(9)

Symptoms from methanol poisoning include headaches, ear buzzing, dizziness, nausea, gastrointestinal disturbances, weakness, vertigo, chills, memory lapses, numbness and shooting pains in the extremities, behavioral disturbances, and neuritis. The most well knowm problems from methanol poisoning are vision problems including misty vision, progressive contraction of visual fields, blurring of vision, obscuration of vision, retinal damage, and blindness. Formaldehye is a known carcinogen, causes retinal damage, interferes with DNA replication, causes birth defects.(10) Due to the lack of a couple of key enzymes, humans are many times more sensitive to the toxic effects of methanol than animals. Therefore, tests of aspartame or methanol on animals do not accurately reflect the danger for humans. As pointed out by Dr Woodrow C. Monte, Director of the Food Science and Nutrition Laboratory at Arizona State University, "There are no human or mammalian studies to evaluate the possible mutagenic, teratogenic, or carcinogenic effects of chronic administration of methyl alcohol."(11)

He was so concerned about the unresolved safety issues that he filed suit with the FDA requesting a hearing to address these issues. He asked the FDA to "slow down on this soft drink issue long enough to answer some of the important questions. It's not fair that you are leaving the full burden of proof on the few of us who are concerned and have such limited resources. You must remember that you are the American public's last defense. Once you allow usage (of aspartame) there is literally nothing I or my colleagues can do to reverse the course. Aspartame will then join saccharin, the sulfiting agents, and God knows how many other questionable compounds enjoined to insult the human constitution with governmental approval."(10) Shortly thereafter, the Commissioner of the FDA, Arthur Hull Hayes, Jr., approved the use of aspartame in carbonated beverages, he then left for a position with G.D. Searle's Public Relations firm.(11)

It has been pointed out that some fruit juices and alcoholic beverages contain small amounts of methanol. It is important to remember, however, that methanol never appears alone. In every case, ethanol is present, usually in much higher amounts. Ethanol is an antidote for methanol toxicity in humans.(9) The troops of Desert Storm were

"treated" to large amounts of aspartame-sweetened beverages which had been heated to over 86 degrees F. in the Saudi Arabian sun. Many of them returned home with numerous disorders similar to what has been seen in persons who have been chemically poisoned by formaldehyde. The free methanol in the beverages may have been a contributing factor in these illnesses. Other breakdown products of aspartame such as DKP (discussed below) may also have been a factor.

In a 1993 act that can only be described as "unconscionable," the FDA approved aspartame as an ingredient in numerous food items that would always be heated to above 86 degrees F (30 degrees C).

DIKETOPIPERAZINE (DKP)

DKP is a by-product of aspartame metabolism. DKP has been implicated in the occurrence of brain tumors. Olney noticed that DKP, when nitrosated in the gut, produced a compound which was similar to N-nitrosourea, a powerful brain tumor causing chemical. Some authors have said that DKP is produced after aspartame ingestion. I am not sure if that is correct. It is definitely true that DKP is formed in liquid aspartame-containing products during prolonged storage.

G.D. Searle conducted animal experiments on the safety of DKP. The FDA found numerous experimental errors occurred, including "clerical errors, mixed-up animals, animals not getting drugs they were supposed to get, pathological specimens lost because of improper handling," and many other errors.(12) These sloppy laboratory procedures may explain why both the test and control animals had sixteen times more brain tumors than would be expected in experiments of this length. In an ironic twist, shortly after these experimental errors were discovered, the FDA used guidelines recommended by G.D. Searle to develop the Industry-wide FDA standards for Good Laboratory Practices.(11) DKP has also been implicated as a cause of uterine polyps and changes in blood cholesterol by FDA Toxicologist Dr Jacqueline Verrett in her testimony before the US Senate.(13)

AILMENTS RESULTING FROM ASPARTAME

The components of aspartame can lead to a wide variety of ailments. Some of these problems occur gradually, others are immediate, acute reactions. There is an enormous population of people who are suffering

from symptoms contributed to by aspartame, yet they have no idea why herbs or drugs are not helping relieve their problems. There are other users of aspartame who appear not to be suffering immediate reactions to aspartame. But even these individuals are susceptible to the long-term damage caused by excitatory amino acids, phenylalanine, methanol, and DKP. A few of the many disorders that are of particular concern to me include the following.

Birth Defects.

Dr Diana Dow Edwards, a researcher was funded by Monsanto to study possible birth defects caused by the ingestion of aspartame. After preliminary data showed damaging information about aspartame, funding for the study was cut off. A Genetic Pediatrician at Emory University has testified that aspartame is causing birth defects. 7360-367.

In the book, *While Waiting: A Prenatal Guidebook* by George R. Verrilli, M.D. and Anne Marie Mueser, it is stated that aspartame is suspected of causing brain damage in sensitive individuals. A fetus may be at risk for these effects. Some researchers have suggested that high doses of aspartame may be associated with problems ranging from dizziness and subtle brain changes to mental retardation.

Cancer (Brain Cancer).

In 1981, Satya Dubey, an FDA statistician, stated that the brain tumor data on aspartame was so "worrisome" that he could not recommend approval of NutraSweet.(14) In a two-year study conducted by the manufacturer of aspartame, twelve of the 320 rats fed a normal diet and aspartame developed brain tumors while none of the control rats had tumors. Five of the twelve tumors were in rats given a low dose of aspartame.(15) The approval of aspartame was a violation of the Delaney Amendment which was supposed to prevent cancer-causing substances such as methanol (formaldehyde) and DKP from entering our food supply. The late Dr Adrian Gross, an FDA toxicologist, testified before the US Congress that aspartame was capable of producing brain tumors. This made it illegal for the FDA to set an allowable daily intake at any level. He stated in his testimony that Searle's studies were "to a large extent unreliable" and that "at least one of those studies has established beyond any reasonable doubt that aspartame is capable of inducing brain tumors in experimental animals...." He concluded his testimony by asking, "What is the reason for the apparent refusal by the FDA to invoke for this food additive the so-called Delaney Amendment to the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act? And if the FDA itself elects to violate the law, who is left to protect the

health of the public?"(16)

In the mid-1970s it was discovered that the manufacturer of aspartame falsified studies in several ways. One of the techniques used was to cut tumors out of test animals and put them back in the study. Another technique used to falsify the studies was to list animals that had actually died as surviving the study. Thus, the data on brain tumors was likely worse than discussed above. In addition, a former employee of the manufacturer of aspartame, Raymond Schroeder told the FDA on July 13, 1977 that the particles of DKP were so large that the rats could discriminate between the DKP and their normal diet.(12)

It is interesting to note that the incidence of brain tumors in persons over 65 years of age has increase 67% between the years 1973 and 1990. Brain tumors in all age groups has jumped 10%. The greatest increase has come during the years 1985-1987.(17)

In his book, *Aspartame (NutraSweet). Is it Safe?*, Roberts gives evidence that aspartame can cause a particularly dangerous form of cancer - primary lymphoma of the brain.

Diabetes.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is actually recommending this chemical poison to persons with diabetes. According to research conducted by H.J. Roberts, a diabetes specialist, a member of the ADA, and an authority on artificial sweeteners, aspartame:

- 1) Leads to the precipitation of clinical diabetes.
- 2) Causes poorer diabetic control in diabetics on insulin or oral drugs.
- 3) Leads to the aggravation of diabetic complications such as retinopathy, cataracts, neuropathy and gastroparesis.
- 4) Causes convulsions.

In a statement concerning the use of products containing aspartain by persons with diabetes and hypoglycemia, Roberts says: "Unfortunately, many patients in my practice, and others seen in consultation, developed serious metabolic, neurologic and other complications that could be specifically attributed to using aspartame products. This was evidenced by:

"The loss of diabetic control, the intensification of hypoglycemia, the occurrence of presumed 'insulin reactions' (including convulsions) that proved to be aspartame reactions, and the precipitation, aggravation or simulation of diabetic complications (especially impaired vision and neuropathy) while using these products.

"Dramatic improvement of such features after avoiding aspartame, and the prompt predictable recurrence of these problems when the patient resumed aspartame products, knowingly or inadvertently."

Roberts goes on to say:

"I regret the failure of other physicians and the American Diabetes Association (ADA) to sound appropriate warnings to patients and consumers based on these repeated findings which have been described in my corporate-neutral studies and publications."

Blaylock stated that excitotoxins such as that found in aspartame can precipitate diabetes in persons who are genetically susceptible to the disease.(5)

Emotional Disorders.

A double blind study of the effects of aspartame on persons with mood disorders was recently conducted by Dr Ralph G. Walton. Since the study wasn't funded/controlled by the makers of aspartame, The NutraSweet Company refused to sell him the aspartame. Walton was forced to obtain and certify it from an outside source.

The study showed a large increase in serious symptoms for persons taking aspartame. Since some of the symptoms were so serious, the Institutional Review Board had to stop the study. Three of the participants had said that they had been "poisoned" by aspartame. Walton concludes that "individuals with mood disorders are particularly sensitive to this artificial sweetener; its use in this population should be discouraged."(18) Aware that the experiment could not be repeated because of the danger to the test subjects, Walton was recently quoted as saying, "I know it causes seizures. I'm convinced also that it definitely causes behavioral changes. I'm very angry that this substance is on the market. I personally question the reliability and validity of any studies funded by the NutraSweet Company."(19)

There are numerous reported cases of low brain serotonin levels, depression and other emotional disorders that have been linked to aspartame and often are relieved by stopping the intake of aspartame. Researchers have pointed out that increasing in phenylalanine levels in the brain, which can and does occur in persons without PKU, leads to a decreased level of the neurotransmitter, serotonin, which leads to a variety of emotional disorders. Dr William M. Pardridge of UCLA testified before the US Senate that a youth drinking four 16-ounce bottles of diet soda per day leads to an enormous increase in the phenylalanine level.

Epilepsy/Seizures.

With the large and growing number of seizures caused by aspartame, it is sad to see that the Epilepsy Foundation is promoting the "safety" of aspartame. At Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 80 people who had suffered seizures after ingesting aspartame were surveyed. Community Nutrition Institute concluded the following about the survey:

"These 80 cases meet the FDA's own definition of an imminent hazard to the public health, which requires the FDA to expeditiously remove a product from the market."

Both the Air Force's magazine Flying Safety and the Navy's magazine, Navy Physiology published articles warning about the many dangers of aspartame including the cumulative deleterious effects of methanol and the greater likelihood of birth defects. The articles note that the ingestion of aspartame can make pilots more susceptible to seizures and vertigo. Twenty articles sounding warnings about ingesting aspartame while flying have also appeared in the National Business Aircraft Association Digest (NBAA Digest 1993), Aviation Medical Bulletin (1988), The Aviation Consumer (1988), Canadian General Aviation News (1990), Pacific Flyer (1988), General Aviation News (1989), Aviation Safety Digest (1989), and Plane and Pilot (1990) and a paper warning about aspartame was presented at the 57th Annual Meeting of the Aerospace Medical Association (Gaffney 1986).

Recently, a hotline was set up for pilots suffering from acute reactions to aspartame ingestion. Over 600 pilots have reported symptoms including some who have reported suffering grand mal seizures in the cockpit due to aspartame.(21)

One of the original studies on aspartame was performed in 1969 by an independent scientist, Dr Harry Waisman. He studied the effects of aspartame on infant primates. Out of the seven infant monkeys, one died after 300 days and five others had grand mal seizures. Of course, these negative findings were not submitted to the FDA during the approval process.(22)

Why don't we hear about these things?

The reason many people do not hear about serious reactions to aspartame is twofold:

1) Lack of awareness by the general population. Aspartame-caused

diseases are not reported in the newspapers like plane crashes. This is because these incidents occur one at a time in thousands of different locations across the US.

2) Most people do not associate their symptoms with the long-term use of aspartame. For the people who have killed a significant percentage of the brain cells and thereby caused a chronic illness, there is no way that they would normally associate such an illness with aspartame consumption. How aspartame was approved is a lesson in how chemical and pharmaceutical companies can manipulate government agencies such as the FDA, "bribe" organizations such as the American Dietetic Association, and flood the scientific community with flawed and fraudulent industry-sponsored studies funded by the makers of aspartame.

Erik Millstone, a researcher at the Science Policy Research Unit of Sussex University has compiled thousands of pages of evidence, some of which have been obtained using the freedom of information act 23, showing:

1. Laboratory tests were faked and dangers were concealed.
2. Tumors were removed from animals and animals that had died were "restored to life" in laboratory records.
3. False and misleading statements were made to the FDA.
4. The two US Attorneys given the task of bringing fraud charges against the aspartame manufacturer took positions with the manufacturer's law firm, letting the statute of limitations run out.
5. The Commissioner of the FDA overruled the objections of the FDA's own scientific board of inquiry. Shortly after that decision, he took a position with Burson-Marsteller, the firm in charge of public relations for G.D. Searle.

A Public Board of Inquiry (PBOI) was conducted in 1980. There were three scientists who reviewed the objections of Olney and Turner to the approval of aspartame. They voted unanimously against aspartame's approval. The FDA Commissioner, Dr Arthur Hull Hayes, Jr. then created a 5-person Scientific Commission to review the PBOI findings. After it became clear that the Commission would uphold the PBOI's decision by a vote of 3 to 2, another person was added to the Commission, creating a deadlocked vote. This allowed the FDA Commissioner to break the deadlock and approve aspartame for dry goods in 1981. Dr Jacqueline Verrett, the Senior Scientist in an FDA Bureau of Foods review team created in August 1977 to review the Bressler Report (a report that detailed G.D. Searle's abuses during the pre-approval testing) said:

"It was pretty obvious that somewhere along the line, the bureau

officials were working up to a whitewash." In 1987, Verrett testified before the US Senate stating that the experiments conducted by Searle were a "disaster." She stated that her team was instructed not to comment on or be concerned with the overall validity of the studies. She stated that questions about birth defects have not been answered. She continued her testimony by discussing the fact that DKP has been shown to increase uterine polyps and change blood cholesterol and that increasing the temperature of the product leads to an increase in production of DKP.(13)

Revolving doors

The FDA and the manufacturers of aspartame have had a revolving door of employment for many years. In addition to the FDA Commissioner and two US Attorneys leaving to take positions with companies connected with G.D. Searle, four other FDA officials connected with the approval of aspartame took positions connected with the NutraSweet industry between 1979 and 1982 including the Deputy FDA Commissioner, the Special Assistant to the FDA Commissioner, the Associate Director of the Bureau of Foods and Toxicology and the Attorney involved with the Public Board of Inquiry.(24)

It is important to realize that this type of revolving-door activity has been going on for decades. The Townsend Letter for Doctors (11/92) reported on a study revealing that 37 of 49 top FDA officials who left the FDA took positions with companies they had regulated. They also reported that over 150 FDA officials owned stock in drug companies they were assigned to manage. Many organizations and universities receive large sums of money from companies connected to the NutraSweet Association, a group of companies promoting the use of aspartame. In January 1993, the American Dietetic Association received a US\$75,000 grant from the NutraSweet Company. The American Dietetic Association has stated that the NutraSweet Company writes their "Facts" sheets.(25)

Many other "independent" organizations and researchers receive large sums of money from the manufacturers of aspartame. The American Diabetes Association has received a large amount of money from Nutrasweet, including money to run a cooking school in Chicago (presumably to teach diabetes how to use Nutrasweet in their cooking).

A researcher in New England who has pointed out the dangers of aspartame in the past is now a Monsanto consultant. Another researcher in the Southeastern US had testified about the dangers of

aspartame on fetuses. An investigative reporter has discovered that he was told to keep his mouth shut to avoid causing the loss of a large grant from a diet cola manufacturer in the NutraSweet Association.

What is the FDA doing to protect the consumer from the dangers of aspartame? Less than nothing.

In 1992, the FDA approved aspartame for use in malt beverages, breakfast cereals, and refrigerated puddings and fillings. In 1993 the FDA approved aspartame for use in hard and soft candies, non-alcoholic flavored beverages, tea beverages, fruit juices and concentrates, baked goods and baking mixes, and frostings, toppings and fillings for baked goods.

In 1991, the FDA banned the importation of stevia. The powder of the leaf has been used for hundreds of years as an alternative sweetener. It is used widely in Japan with no adverse effects. Scientists involved in reviewing stevia have declared it to be safe for human consumption - something which has been well known in many parts of the world where it is not banned. Everyone that I have spoken with in regards to this issue believes that stevia was banned to keep the product from taking hold in the US and cutting into sales of aspartame.(26)

What is the US Congress doing to protect the consumer from the dangers of aspartame? Nothing.

What is the US Administration (President) doing to protect the consumer from the dangers of aspartame? Nothing.

Aspartame consumption is not only a problem in the US. It is being sold in over 70 countries throughout the world.

ASPARTAME CAN BE FOUND IN:

- instant breakfasts
- breath mints
- cereals
- sugar-free chewing gum
- cocoa mixes
- coffee beverages
- frozen desserts
- gelatin desserts
- juice beverages
- laxatives
- multivitamins

- milk drinks
- pharmaceuticals and supplements
- shake mixes
- soft drinks
- tabletop sweeteners
- tea beverages
- instant teas and coffees
- topping mixes
- wine coolers
- yogurt

I have been told that aspartame has been found in products where it is not listed on the label. One must be particular careful of pharmaceuticals and supplements. I have been informed that even some supplements made by well-known supplement manufacturers such as Twinlabs contain aspartame.

The information I have related above is just the tip of the iceberg as far as damaging information about aspartame. In order for the reader to find out more, I have included some resources below.

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