

Major New Study Dispels Aspartame Myths

The most comprehensive review ever of the scientific research studies on aspartame concludes that there is no evidence that the low-calorie sweetener is linked to health problems or to cancer.

The review by an international panel of highly respected scientists, concludes that aspartame is safe for people of all ages and with a variety of health conditions. The review was published on the 14th of September in the renowned *Critical Reviews in Toxicology*.

The panel reviewed more than 500 reports dating from before aspartame was approved for use as a food ingredient to the most recent studies on the popular low-calorie sweetener, which has now been available for more than a quarter of a century.

A significant part of the study involved an analysis to estimate current consumption levels of aspartame. The panel found that consumption, which averages 4.9mg/kg/day, is a fraction of the ADI (Acceptable Daily Intake) for aspartame which is set at 40mg/kg/day, while even among those with the highest intake consumption remains considerably below this level.

Included in the data reviewed by the panel were studies which examined potential health effects, including at amounts of aspartame which far exceeded the ADI. As well as studies involving healthy adults and children, studies have also examined the potential effects of aspartame on adults and children with diabetes, children who are hyperactive or claiming to be sugar-sensitive and people with Parkinson's disease and depression.

The Expert Panel's evaluation concluded:

Aspartame is safe. No credible evidence was found that aspartame is carcinogenic, neurotoxic or has any other adverse effects even when consumed at many times the established ADI levels.

Some specific findings of the evaluation:

Aspartame does not have carcinogenic or cancer promoting activity.

"In conclusion, it can confidently be stated that there is no credible evidence that aspartame is carcinogenic".

Studies that mimic human exposure do not show any evidence of neurological effects. Aspartame is not neurotoxic.

"The data from these studies, in general, do not support the hypothesis that aspartame in the human diet will affect nervous system function, learning or behaviour."

"The effect of aspartame on behaviour, cognitive function, and seizures has been studied extensively in animals, healthy children, hyperactive children, sugar-sensitive children, healthy adults, individuals with Parkinson's disease, and individuals suffering from depression. Overall, the weight of the evidence indicates that aspartame has no effect on behaviour, cognitive function, neural function, or seizures in any of these groups."

There is no evidence to support an association between aspartame consumption and obesity.

"On the contrary, when used in multidisciplinary weight control programs, aspartame may actually aid in long-term control of body-weight."

The review concludes:

"Aspartame is a well-characterised, thoroughly studied, high-intensity sweetener that has a long history of safe use in the food supply and can help reduce the caloric content of a wide variety of foods."

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