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Aspartame was not approved until 1981, in dry foods. For over eight years the FDA refused to approve it because of the seizures and brain tumors this drug produced in lab animals. The FDA continued to refuse to approve it until President Reagan took office (a friend of Searle) and fired the FDA Commissioner who wouldn't approve it. Dr. Arthur Hull Hayes was appointed as commissioner. Even then there was so much opposition to approval that a Board of Inquiry was set up. The Board said: "Do not approve aspartame". Dr. Hayes OVERRULED his own Board of Inquiry.

Shortly after Commissioner Arthur Hull Hayes, Jr., approved the use of aspartame in carbonated beverages, he left for a position with G.D. Searle's Public Relations firm.

Long-Term Damage

It appears to cause slow, silent damage in those unfortunate enough to not have immediate reactions and a reason to avoid it. It may take one year, five years, 10 years, or 40 years, but it seems to cause some reversible and some irreversible changes in health over long-term use.

METHANOL (AKA WOOD ALCOHOL/POISON) (10% OF ASPARTAME):

Methanol/wood alcohol is a deadly poison. People may recall that methanol was 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 encounter 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 Jell-O).

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." They 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.

The most well known problems from methanol poisoning are vision problems. Formaldehyde is a known carcinogen, causes retinal damage, interferes with DNA replication, and causes birth defects. 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."

It has been pointed out that fruit juices and alcoholic beverages contain small amounts of methanol. It is important to remember, that the methanol in natural products never appears alone. In every case, ethanol is present, usually in much higher amounts. Ethanol is an antidote for methanol toxicity in humans. 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 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).

Much worse, on 27 June 1996, without public notice, the FDA removed all restrictions from aspartame allowing it to be used in everything, including all heated and baked goods. The truth about aspartame's toxicity is far different than what the NutraSweet Company would have you readers believe. In February of 1994, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released the listing of adverse reactions reported to the FDA (DHHS 1994). Aspartame accounted for more than 75% of all adverse reactions reported to the FDA's Adverse Reaction Monitoring System (ARMS). By the FDA's own admission fewer then ONE PERCENT of those who have problems with something they consume ever report it to the FDA. This balloons the almost 10,000 complaints they once had to around a million. However, the FDA has a record keeping problem and they tend to discourage or even misdirect complaints, at least on aspartame. The fact remains, though, that MOST victims don't have a clue that aspartame may be the cause of their many problems!

Many reactions to aspartame were very serious including seizures and death. Those reactions included:

Abdominal Pain, Anxiety attacks, arthritis, asthma, Asthmatic Reactions, Bloating, Edema (Fluid Retention), Blood Sugar Control Problems (Hypoglycemia or Hyperglycemia), Brain Cancer (Pre-approval studies in animals), Breathing difficulties, burning eyes or throat, Burning Urination, can't think straight, Chest Pains, chronic cough, Chronic Fatigue, Confusion, Death, Depression, Diarrhea, Dizziness, Excessive Thirst or Hunger, fatigue, feel unreal, flushing of face, Hair Loss (Baldness) or Thinning of Hair, Headaches/Migraines, dizziness, Hearing Loss, Heart palpitations, Hives (Urticaria), Hypertension (High Blood Pressure), Impotency and Sexual Problems, inability to concentrate, Infection Susceptibility, Insomnia, Irritability, Itching, Joint Pains, laryngitis, "like thinking in a fog", Marked Personality Changes, Memory loss, Menstrual Problems or Changes, Migraines and

Severe Headaches (Trigger or Cause From Chronic Intake), Muscle spasms, Nausea or Vomiting, Numbness or Tingling of Extremities, Other Allergic-Like Reactions, Panic Attacks, Phobias, poor memory, Rapid Heart Beat, Rashes, Seizures and Convulsions, Slurring of Speech, Swallowing Pain, Tachycardia, Tremors, Tinnitus, Vertigo, Vision Loss, and Weight gain.

Aspartame Disease Mimics Symptoms or Worsens the Following Diseases:

Fibromyalgia, Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's Disease, Lupus, Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS), Diabetes and Diabetic Complications, Epilepsy, Alzheimer's Disease, Birth Defects, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Lymphoma, Lyme Disease, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Panic Disorder, Depression and other Psychological Disorders.

How it happens:

Methanol, from aspartame, is released in the small intestine when the methyl group of aspartame encounters the enzyme chymotrypsin (Stegink 1984, page 143). Free methanol begins to form in liquid aspartame-containing products at temperatures above 86 degrees F. also within the human body.

The methanol is then converted to formaldehyde. The formaldehyde converts to formic acid, ant sting poison. Toxic formic acid is used as an activator to strip epoxy and urethane coatings. Imagine what it does to your tissues!

Phenylalanine and aspartic acid, 90% of aspartame, are amino acids normally used in synthesis of protoplasm when supplied by the foods we eat. But when unaccompanied by other amino acids we use [there are 20], they are neurotoxic.

That is why a warning for Phenylketonurics is found on EQUAL and other aspartame products. Phenylketenurics are 2% of the population with extreme sensitivity to this chemical unless it's present in food. It gets you too, causing brain disorders and birth defects! Finally, the phenyalanine breaks down into DKP, a brain tumor agent.

In other words: Aspartame converts to dangerous byproducts that have no natural countermeasures. A dieter's empty stomach accelerates these conversions and amplifies the damage. Components of aspartame go straight to the brain, damage that causes headaches, mental confusion, seizures and faulty balance. Lab rats and other test animals died of brain tumors.

Despite the claims of Monsanto and bedfellows:

1. Methanol from alcohol and juices does not get converted to formaldehyde to any significant extent. There is very strong evidence to confirm this fact for alcoholic beverages and fairly strong evidence for juices.
2. Formaldehyde obtained from methanol is very toxic in *very small* doses as seen by recent research.

3. Aspartame causes chronic toxicity reactions/damage due to the methanol to formaldehyde and other break down products despite what is claimed otherwise by the very short, industry-funded experiments using a test substance that is chemically different and absorbed differently than what is available to the general public. "Strangely enough", almost all independent studies show that aspartame can cause health problems.
4. A common ploy from Monsanto is to claim that aspartame is "safe" yet a few select people may have "allergic" reactions to it. This is typical Monsanto nonsense, of course. Their own research shows that it does not cause "allergic" reactions. It is there way of trying to minimize and hide the huge numbers of toxicity reactions and damage that people are experiencing from the long-term use of aspartame.

Summary:

Given the following points, it is definitely premature for researchers to discount the role of methanol in aspartame side effects:

1. The amount of methanol ingested from aspartame is unprecedented in human history. Methanol from fruit juice ingestion does not even approach the quantity of methanol ingested from aspartame, especially in persons who ingest one to three liters (or more) of diet beverages every day. Unlike methanol from aspartame, methanol from natural products is probably not absorbed or converted to its toxic metabolites in significant amounts as discussed earlier.
2. Lack of laboratory-detectable changes in plasma formic acid and formaldehyde levels do not preclude damage being caused by these toxic metabolites. Laboratory-detectable changes in formate levels are often not found in short exposures to methanol.
3. Aspartame-containing products often provide little or no nutrients which may protect against chronic methanol poisoning and are often consumed in between meals. Persons who ingest aspartame-containing products are often dieting and more likely to have nutritional deficiencies than persons who take the time to make fresh juices.
4. Persons with certain health conditions or on certain drugs may be much more susceptible to chronic methanol poisoning.
5. Chronic diseases and side effects from slow poisons often build silently over a long period of time. Many chronic diseases that seem to appear suddenly have actually been building in the body over many years.
6. An increasing body of research is showing that many people are highly sensitive to low doses of formaldehyde in the environment. Environmental exposure to formaldehyde and ingestion of methanol (which converts to formaldehyde) from aspartame likely has a cumulative deleterious effect.

7. Formic acid has been shown to slowly accumulate in various parts of the body. Formic acid has been shown to inhibit oxygen metabolism.
8. There are a very large and growing number of persons who are experiencing chronic health problems similar to the side effects of chronic methanol poisoning when ingesting aspartame-containing products for a significant length of time. This includes many cases of eye damage similar to the type of eye damage seen in methanol poisoning cases.

Toxicity Effects of Aspartame - Short-term and/or Long-Term Use

Note: It often takes at least sixty days without any aspartame NutraSweet to see a significant improvement. Check all labels very carefully (including vitamins and pharmaceuticals). Look for the word "aspartame" on the label and avoid it. (Also, it is a good idea to avoid "acesulfame-k" or "sunette.")

Finally, avoid getting nutrition information from junk food industry PR organizations such as IFIC or organizations that accept large sums of money from the junk and chemical food industry such as the American Dietetic Association. If you are a user of any products with aspartame, and you have physical, visual, mental problems... take the 60-day no aspartame test. If, after two months with no aspartame, your symptoms are either gone, or are much less severe, please get involved to get this neurotoxin off the market.

Write a letter to the FDA, with a copy to Betty Martini (for proof of how the FDA doesn't keep proper records). Write your congressmen. Return products containing aspartame to the point of purchase... for a FULL refund. Make a big stink if they WON'T give you a full refund! Tell all your friends and family... and if they stop using aspartame and also "wake up well"... get them involved in the same way.

Aspartame is an "approved sweetener" because of a few greedy and dishonest people who place profits above human life and well-being. With the FDA and our Congress culpable, only an INFORMED and ACTIVE public will affect its reclassification from "food additive" to TOXIC DRUG, and removed from the human food chain.