



HSC

HOLLAND • SWEETENER • COMPANY

newsletter

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This Newsletter is quarterly published by the Holland Sweetener Company. Please respond to hsc.hsc@dsm-group.com or phone +31-46-4764065.

Aspartame is absolutely Safe

In our last Newsletter (December 1999) we already reported about the misinformation on the safety of aspartame circulating on the Internet. Unfortunately some of these Internet stories have been picked up by the press in the last few months and appeared in various national newspapers.

Aspartame is one of the most thoroughly tested ingredient in our diet. Numerous scientific studies have been conducted on aspartame since its discovery. All of the available safety information has been intensive reviewed over a number of years by many national and international bodies, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the USA, the Scientific Committee on Food of the European Community and the Joint Food and Agriculture Organisation/World Health Organisation Expert Committee on Food Additives. They have all concluded that aspartame is absolutely safe for human food use.

No aspartame disease

In the negative stories on a number of safety diseases have been attributed to the intake of aspartame, including multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, brain cancer and seizures are. The first important comment on these allegations is that aspartame as such can not cause any diseases. Upon consumption it is digested rapidly in the intestine into its three

components: phenylalanine, aspartic acid and methanol. These are then taken into the bloodstream and metabolised in the same way as when they would have come from any other food. Aspartame itself never enters the bloodstream, since it can not pass across the lining of the gut intact. Thus there can be no such thing as "aspartame-disease".

Methanol

A large number of commentators state that methanol, formed when aspartame is digested, is the source of these health problems. In fact methanol is released on each

occasion when you consume everyday products such as fruit and vegetables. For instance the consumption of a glass of orange juice sets free three times the quantity of methanol than a glass of diet soft drink (sweetened solely with aspartame).

Two amino acids

Other allegations focus on the two amino acids (aspartame's building blocks). Here too, there is no scientific basis. Both amino acids, phenylalanine and aspartic acid, are present in our everyday diet. For instance, in comparison to a glass of diet soft drink (sweetened solely with aspartame) a glass of milk will deliver over ten times the amount of aspartic acid and about five times the amount of phenylalanine.

More information

It is without doubt that the safety of aspartame has been thoroughly established and that consumption of products containing aspartame is absolutely safe. If you want further information about the safety of aspartame and the opinions of the experts you will find a list of Internet addresses of associations and regulatory bodies below.

Sites with information on safety of aspartame*

Associations & General sites

- www.isabru.org (International Sweeteners Association)
- www.caloriecontrol.org/aspartam.html & [/opinasp.html](http://www.caloriecontrol.org/opinasp.html) (Calorie Control Council)
- www.fda.gov/dac/features/1999/699_sugar.html (FDA)
- www.ificinfo.health.org/brochure/aspartam.htm (International Food Information Council)
- www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00000426.htm (Center for Disease Control)
- www.diabetes.org/ada/aspartame.asp (American Diabetes Organisation)
- www.eatright.org/adsp0598.html (American Dietetic Association)
- www.acsh.org/ (American Council on Science and Health)
- www.msfacts.org/aspart.htm (Multiple Sclerosis Foundation)
- www.nsda.org/SoftDrinks/aspartame.html (National soft drinks association USA)
- www.softdrink.ca/aspartame.htm (Canadian soft drinks association)
- web.mit.edu/newsoffice/tt/1998/sep16/aspartame.html (MIT)
- www.mayohhealth.org/ (Mayo foundation for Medical Education and Research)

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