

## **Is Aspartame Safe? Decide for Yourself.**

*By Kia Armstrong*

Nash's Lending Library at the Farm Store is a wonderful resource for interesting books, CD's, DVD's and newspaper articles. Recently I borrowed, *Sweet Misery*, a film by Cori Brackett which follows her investigation into Aspartame after discovering that her diet soda habit (sweetened with aspartame) had been making her extremely sick for over a decade.

Aspartame is an artificial sweetener, an additive, that is not produced in nature. Apparently some of the molecules that compose Aspartame are poisonous to humans. Some research indicates that Aspartame is linked to seizures, tremors, migraines, memory loss, chronic fatigue, brain tumors, cancer, panic attacks, depression, high blood pressure, etc. Research also indicates that Aspartame mimicks symptoms or worsens diseases such as fibromyalgia, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, parkinson's, lupus, diabetes, epilepsy, alzheimers, birth defects and attention deficit disorder.

In the mid 1980's aspartame was pushed through the FDA by G.D. Searle, the company that developed the sweetener. Some allege that Donald Rumsfeld, then President of G.D. Searle, used his political clout to get aspartame approved, despite the objection of many FDA scientists and researchers. In 1985, Monsanto acquired G.D. Searle. (for more info on the history of Nutra Sweet, check out <http://www.nutrasweet.com/company.asp>)

Today, aspartame has been totally integrated into our food and drug industries in over 100 countries, and pervasive in American society. The issue of aspartame is confusing one for folks, as products such as Equal have monetarily aligned themselves with the health care industry for decades. Currently, Equal is the major national sponsor of the American Diabetes Association. Deep pockets have been known to keep deep secrets. Diabetics are encouraged by the healthy care industry to use artificial sweeteners to control their blood sugar levels, and individuals trying to lose weight or take care of their bodies choose diet sodas or diet drinks loaded with such sweeteners.

For the complete Center for Disease Control (CDC) report and in depth coverage of its findings, check out [http://www.wnho.net/damning\\_cdc\\_investigation\\_on\\_aspartame.htm](http://www.wnho.net/damning_cdc_investigation_on_aspartame.htm)

Currently, aspartame can be found in soft drinks, over-the-counter drugs & prescription drugs (very common and listed under "inactive ingredients"), vitamin & herb supplements, yogurt, instant breakfasts, candy, breath mints, cereals, sugar-free chewing gum, cocoa mixes, coffee beverages, instant breakfasts, gelatin desserts, frozen desserts, juice beverages, laxatives, milk drinks, shake mixes, tabletop sweeteners, tea beverages, instant teas and coffees, topping mixes, wine coolers, etc.

Below is a list of sweeteners to use and to avoid, as recommended by [holisticmed.com](http://holisticmed.com). I encourage you to learn more about aspartame and come to your own conclusions about its role in your or your family's health. I am not an expert on this subject, but I am concerned about how pervasive artificial sweeteners are in our society and the harm they may be inflicting on consumers while corporations are making huge profits.

According to [www.holisticmed.com](http://www.holisticmed.com)

Sweeteners to Use	Sweeteners to Avoid
Stevia *	<a href="#">Aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal, Canderel)</a>
<a href="#">Other Low Carb Sweeteners</a>	<a href="#">Neotame</a>
Evaporated Cane Juice	<a href="#">Sucralose (Splenda, Altern)</a>
Fruit Juice	<a href="#">Acesulfame-K (Sunette, Sweet &amp; Safe, Sweet One)</a>
Rice Syrup	Cyclamates
Honey	Saccharin
Licorice Root (small amounts)	Refined Sugar #
Fructooligosaccharides (FOS)	High Fructose Sweeteners #
Amasake	...
Vegetable Glycerin	...
Sugar Alcohols (xylitol, sorbitol) ^	...
Maple Syrup (Without Added Sugar)	...
Barley Malt	...
* Safe for Diabetics	# Can Be Used in Very Small Amounts While Transitioning to Healthier Sweeteners
^ Use in Small Amounts Avoid if you have bowel disease	

Lastly, here's to all the natural sweetness in our lives. To the raspberries and carrots and nectarines. To the beets, sugar snap peas, melons and gooseberries. To the subtle and sublime, the unique and outrageous. To the honey and the wheat and the kiss of sun so sweet...to our collective health!!!