

## Health Interrupters

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Summer is coming to an end and school is just around the corner. It is time again to get back to work; to think, read, work, focus and study. We often read about what to add to our diet to enhance body and brain function: to eat breakfast, reduce sugar intake and include more alive, nutrient dense foods as well as the essential brain fatty acids such as fish and flax oil.

What we may not be aware of is the enormous amount of hidden toxins in our processed foods that serve to interrupt the body's normal activity. The food industry adds chemicals, called excitotoxins, which stimulate hunger and disrupt normal appetite control. Their intention in using these chemicals is to have you be more interested in eating their food products, subsequently buying more and boosting their profits.

The problem is that these excitotoxins play real havoc in the body. Two examples are the amino acids glutamate (the active ingredient in monosodium glutamate, MSG) and aspartate (a major component of aspartame). They are touted as 'natural' due to the fact that these amino acids are naturally occurring building blocks of proteins and common transmitter chemicals found in the brain and spinal column. They enhance your perception of the food being eaten by stimulating the neurons (the cells that transmit impulses through our nervous system).

When these amino acids are chemically pulled out of context of the way they naturally occur in our foods and used in concentration, they can rise above a critical level in the body. At these levels glutamate and aspartate are deadly toxins to the neurons. They stimulate the neurons to death, damaging body and brain tissue. As a result, they have potential to impair brain function, promote blurred vision, seizures, infertility, reproductive disorders, endocrine (hormonal) damage, cancer and cardiovascular harm.

Excitotoxins exist in diet sodas, canned soups, frozen pizzas, snacks and chips, salad dressings, bouillon cubes, flavor packets, some restaurant and vegetarian foods (you thought you were exempt), and horror of all horrors ...baby food and children's vitamins.

Thanks to food industry lobbyists, hundreds of these excitotoxins can be hidden in foods. They are labeled as yeast extract, soy extract, caseinate, aspartame, aspartic acid, monosodium glutamate and anything that is hydrolyzed or autolyzed. When used in minute amounts these excitotoxins do not have to be individually listed (more thanks to food lobbyists), but can be lumped together under the guise of terms such as 'natural and artificial flavorings' or 'spices'.

Russell Blaylock, MD, neurosurgeon and author of *Excitotoxins: The Taste that Kills* is studied on excitotoxins. He notes in a recent interview, "one early observation with excitotoxicity is that it makes animals grossly obese. What we find in MSG-exposed animals is that they prefer carbohydrates and sugars over protein-rich foods. That was one of the characteristics of this type of obesity. It's very difficult to exercise the weight off weight and almost impossible to diet it off. The appetite is out of control, but the metabolism is also out of control. They have a metabolic syndrome on top of obesity and then you have a state of leptin insensitivity". It reads much like the human cultural and childhood obesity issues we are facing.

And, just in case you are busy eating soy and soy protein isolates (chemically extracted soy proteins) thinking you are out of the woods, you couldn't be further from the truth. Dr. Blaylock reports that soybeans have one of the naturally highest glutamate levels of any plant product. He tells of a 25-year study following people who consumed the most soy products, performing serial CT scans of their brain. They found that the people who consumed the most soybean products had the greatest incidence of dementia and brain atrophy.

In his latest book *Natural Strategies for Cancer Patients*, Dr. Blaylock speaks to how excitotoxins have been found to promote cancer growth and metastasis. "Glutamates (MSG) cause the cancer cells to become mobile and more easily spread. It has been demonstrated in studies that when glutamate levels were increased, cancer grew like wildfire. Likewise, the excitotoxin aspartame (NutraSweet) has been shown to significantly increase leukemia and lymphomas, particularly lymphomas of the brain. The link seems to be in the damage it does to DNA, damage that accumulates over time".

Neurosurgical literature is reporting a significant rise in the incidence of lymphoma of the brain. Incredulously, when they look back at the studies done by the G.D. Searle Company who produced

aspartame, the original studies revealed increased incidence of lymphomas, brain tumors and tumors of multiple organs. Our government approved it anyway.

So, to find your way out of this quagmire of chemicals and once again become the master of your health and brain function is to shop the produce and fresh food aisles. Eat real food. In addition, read ingredient labels carefully when purchasing any packaged product. Avoid those with ingredient names that you cannot pronounce. Avoid any of the toxic ingredients listed above. Add to that unfavorable list white processed sugar, fake sugar (high fructose corn syrup, splenda) and dyes.

There are healthier packaged products. These are products made by smaller, health minded companies with a conscience. They use real ingredients that you would recognize and understand such as oats, rice, whole wheat, honey, maple syrup, nuts and dates. Choose these.

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