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Aspartame Consumption Again Linked to Degeneration of Brain Neurons

Thursday, September 25, 2008 by: David Gutierrez
Key concepts: [Aspartame](#), [Food](#) and [Nerve cells](#)

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(NaturalNews) High intake of the artificial sweetener aspartame may lead to the degeneration of brain cells and various mental disorders, according to a research review conducted by South African scientists from the University of Pretoria and the University of Limpopo and published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

"We propose that excessive aspartame ingestion might be involved in the pathogenesis of certain mental disorders, and also in compromised learning and emotional functioning," the researchers concluded.

The review of prior research found that [aspartame](#), marketed as NutraSweet, Equal, Canderel and Tropicana Slim, leads to both direct and indirect changes in [the brain](#) when consumed in high quantities. Among these effects, the chemical can disrupt amino acid metabolism and structure, degrade nucleic acids, and interfere with the function of nerve cells and hormonal systems. It also appears to change the concentration of certain neurotransmitters in the brain.

The researchers also noted that aspartame appears to cause excessive signaling of nerve cells, and nerve cell damage or even death. By disrupting the functioning of the cells' mitochondria, or energy source, aspartame leads to a cascade of effects on the whole system.

"The energy systems for certain required enzyme reactions become compromised, thus indirectly leading to the inability of enzymes to function optimally," the researchers wrote.

This directly contradicts a review published in 2007, which concluded that "aspartame is safe at current levels of consumption ... no credible evidence was found that aspartame is carcinogenic, neurotoxic, or has any other adverse effect on health."

Aspartame is a widely used artificial sweetener, particularly in [food](#) and beverage products marketed as low calorie or "diet." It is used in more than 6,000 products around the world.

The chemical has been controversial since its introduction, with a number of studies linking it to cancer and neurological and behavioral disorders. People have reported experiencing headaches, insomnia and even seizures from aspartame consumption.

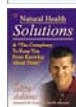
The FDA and the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), however, continue to insist that the sweetener is safe.



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