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## **Is Aspartame Dangerous?**

By Paul J. Toft, DC

Dear Editor:

I was happy that Dr. Lendon Smith wrote about aspartame (ASP, NutraSweet™/Equal™), in the November 22 issue of *Dynamic Chiropractic*.

Approximately 85% of the complaints registered with the FDA concern ASP reactions. This represents 73 different symptoms and 5 deaths. It is estimated that 75 million Americans are experiencing reactions, but most of them are unaware of the relationship between ASP and their symptoms. According to research at MIT, ASP causes a drastic lowering of serotonin levels in the brain. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that functions in the emotional centers of the brain. Low levels may cause headaches, chronic fatigue, anxiety attacks, nervousness, aggravation of phobias, loss of activities that were previously enjoyed, depression, suicidal tendencies, aggressive behavior, and an overall feeling of being "stressed out" or that life is much more of a struggle than it should be. According to the Northwestern Insurance Company, stress-related disability has doubled since 1981. Is it a coincidence that NutraSweet is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year? I don't think so.

All of us have patients that take anti-depressants. Do you tell your patients that NutraSweet can interfere with the anti-depressant's effectiveness? You can bet their MDs don't. Many of your patients are taking anti-depressants to counteract the imbalance in the brain caused by NutraSweet in the first place. Unless they stop using ASP products, these anti-depressants might not work.

ASP also breaks down into formic acid, formaldehyde, and diketopiperazine, known carcinogens. According to the National Cancer Institute, malignant brain tumors have risen dramatically each successive year following NutraSweet's approval for use in soft drinks in 1983. Is it a coincidence that similar tumors showed up in lab animals during testing? How many people have you heard about with brain tumors in the last 10 years?

ASP is also very detrimental to the immune system. Maybe someone should tell Magic Johnson about this as he fights for his life in the next several years. Nobody who is HIV positive should consume ASP products.

Did you know that a Public Board of Inquiry recommended that ASP not be approved until the brain tumor issue was resolved, only to be overturned by A.H. Hayes in 1983? Two months after Mr. Hayes approved ASP, he went to work for a NutraSweet public relations firm.

The media has totally avoided this issue because of offending sponsors and losing millions of dollars of advertising. Are chiropractors the only hope?

*Paul J. Toft, D.C.*



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