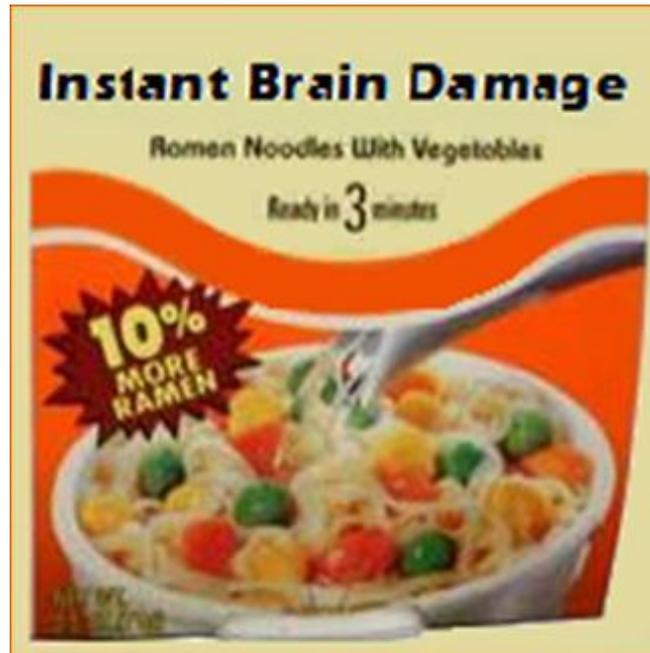


MSG is Everywhere  
by Ian Hannon

---

MSG IS EVERYWHERE!



MSG IS ADDED TO THE MAJORITY OF PACKAGED PRODUCTS, INCLUDING CHIPS, SOUPS, SALAD DRESSINGS, GRAVIES, COLD CUTS, AND ALMOST EVERY FOOD SERVED AT FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS. THE LIST OF FOODS CONTAINING MSG IS ALMOST ENDLESS.<sup>1</sup>

STUDIES SHOW THAT THE CONSUMPTION OF MSG CONTRIBUTES TO **STROKES, BRAIN TUMORS, MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, ALZHEIMER'S, AND OTHER NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS, AS WELL AS OBESITY AND BLINDNESS.**<sup>2</sup>

---

1. "What Foods to Avoid?" *Msgtruth.Org*. 2007. *Msgtruth.Org*. 13 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.msgtruth.org/avoid.htm>>.

2. Blaylock, Russell. "Excitotoxins in Your Diet: How They Affect Your Health." *Nurses World Magazine* April-May 2007: 42-44.

Background image courtesy of [http://www.cvcoffee.com/prod\\_images\\_blowup/Mauchan\\_Instant\\_Lunch.jpg](http://www.cvcoffee.com/prod_images_blowup/Mauchan_Instant_Lunch.jpg).

---

Easy Mac. Progresso Soup. Doritos. Ramen Noodles. These products are godsend for those living on an American college student's budget. However, the adverse effects they have on our health go beyond the gaining of the dreaded "freshman 15." All of these foods contain monosodium glutamate (MSG), which is an excitotoxin. When brain cells communicate, neurotransmitters are secreted in small amounts in order to "excite" nearby brain cells and transmit a message. Most scientists believed all neurotransmitters to be relatively benign until 1969, when neuroscientist John O'Leary discovered two neurotransmitters that are harmful to the brain: glutamate (MSG) and

aspartame, which is found in the artificial sweeteners used in diet sodas (Newman). These excitotoxins, in essence, “excite” brain cells to death by causing them to be excessively stimulated, resulting in brain damage (Newman).

According to Dr. Byron Newman, “excitotoxicity is something that is connected with virtually everything bad that can happen to the brain--strokes, brain injury, brain tumors, severe hypoglycemia, multiple sclerosis, asphyxia, heavy metal poisoning, and most of the neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and Lou Gehrig’s disease.” In addition to these serious, long-term side effects, the consumption of MSG has negative short-term health effects as well, including headaches, sweating, facial pressure, numbness or tingling around the mouth, heart palpitations, chest pain, and/or asthmatic symptoms (“Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)”). These reactions take effect within one hour after consuming MSG (“Effects of Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)”). Many people are familiar with the term “MSG,” but the masses are oblivious to the devastating toll that it takes on the human body.

The number of foods that contain MSG is astounding. It is present in chips, cold cuts, salad dressings, fresh produce that has been sprayed with pesticide, gelatin, and in virtually every food served in every fast food restaurant in the United States (The Natural Health Place). The most alarming fact is the food industry increases the amount of MSG put in our food every year. National consumption of MSG has risen from about one million pounds in 1950 to over 300 million pounds yearly (The Natural Health Place). This raises the following question: if scientists have known about the dangers of ingesting of MSG for over thirty years, why do food manufacturers not only continue to add it to our food, but increase the amount used every year? The answer is simple: manufacturers record larger profits when they add MSG to our food. In “MSG & Aspartame During Pregnancy,” Richard Pressinger reports on Campbell’s Soup’s discovery: when they add MSG to their chicken soup, they only need to use half as much chicken to achieve the same taste as when they don’t use MSG.

In addition, the food industry constantly camouflages the presence of MSG, an underhanded tactic to keep the public from identifying the toxic chemical. MSG can be identified as monopotassium glutamate, yeast extract, calcium caseinate, corn oil, textured protein, and up to twenty other names (The Natural Health Place; “Hidden Sources”). This is not a conspiracy theory. Dr. Russell Blaylock, author of *Excitotoxins: The Taste that Kills*, met with a senior executive in the food additive industry, who reportedly acknowledged that “these excitotoxins are going to be in our food no matter how many name changes are necessary” (“Hidden Sources”). It is truly mind boggling how the food industry is permitted to put MSG in our food using such deceptive methods.

Like the brain, there are glutamate receptors in the human eye. According to the article “MSG Found to Injure Retina, Damage Eyesight,” in an experiment conducted in Japan, a group of rats were put on a diet high in MSG for six months. The rats’ retinal nerve layers thinned by up to 75 percent. At the end of the six months, all of the rats had severe vision impairment, simply because their diet was high in MSG (Saleh).

On top of the fact that consuming MSG results in brain damage and vision loss, there is also scientific evidence that MSG is directly correlated with obesity. In another experiment, scientists injected rats with MSG at birth. No rats are naturally obese, but since MSG triples the amount of insulin that the pancreas produces, scientists were able to create “morbidly obese” rats (Van Buren). When the pancreas increases its insulin secretion, it has severe implications in regards to human health; it leads to obesity and insulin resistance, both of which are early stages of type II diabetes. Before MSG was introduced into Americans’ diets, obesity and type II diabetes were rarely found in children (“MSG and Obesity”). Obesity and type II diabetes are now epidemics in America, and the trend could worsen if MSG consumption continues.

The main reason the food industry is allowed to poison us by putting MSG in our food is because the FDA is more interested in protecting the profits of big businesses than doing its job of

protecting the health of American citizens. In 1969, shortly after Olney's discovery, then FDA Commissioner Herbert Ley presented evidence to the U.S. Senate from four studies that, he alleged, demonstrated that MSG was safe ("MSG Kills"). It was later disclosed that two of the studies the commissioner cited were incomplete and two did not even exist ("MSG Kills"). It is even stated on the FDA's official website that "injections of glutamate in laboratory animals have resulted in damage to nerve cells in the brain" ("FDA and Monosodium Glutamate"). It is a disgrace that a federal organization with as much authority as the FDA blatantly ignores its responsibilities to protect the American people. No matter how it gets into our bodies, MSG damages glutamate receptors, which results in the deterioration of our health. The FDA is well aware of this information but has decided it is more important to assist in lining the pockets of food industry executives than to protect the health of the American people.

After reviewing this information, it is imperative that we as a society become more responsible consumers. MSG is quickly becoming the new cigarette in America; we are becoming addicted to this "nicotine for food," but the worst part is, we don't even realize it. So the next time you reach for a snack, remember this: although foods that contain MSG are often less expensive and more appealing, we cannot take lightly the deadly risks of consuming MSG.

#### Works Cited

- Blaylock, Russell. "Excitotoxins in Your Diet: How They Affect Your Health." *Nurses World Magazine* April-May 2007: 42-44.
- "Effects of Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)." HappyCow's Vegetarian Guide. HappyCow. 3 April 2008 <<http://www.happycow.net/health-msg-information.html>>.
- "FDA and Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)." Fda.Gov. 31 Aug. 1995. Food and Drug Administration. 13 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/msg.html>>.
- "Hidden Sources of MSG in Foods." *Rense.com*. 6 April 2008 <<http://www.rense.com/general35/hidd.htm>>.
- "Monosodium Glutamate (MSG): Is It Harmful?" *Mayoclinic.Com*. 2007. Mayo Clinic. 13 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/monosodium-glutamate/AN01251>>.
- "MSG and Obesity." *Msgtruth.Org*. Msgtruth.Org. 13 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.msgtruth.org/obesity.htm>>.
- "MSG Kills." *Truthinlabeling.Org*. 3 Apr. 2008 <[http://www.truthinlabeling.org/Glutes\\_FDAparagraph.html](http://www.truthinlabeling.org/Glutes_FDAparagraph.html)>.
- The Natural Health Place. "The Truth About MSG and Aspartame." *Hilary*. 31 March 2008 <<http://www.hilary.com/features/msg.html>>.
- Pressinger, Richard. "MSG & Aspartame During Pregnancy." *Chem-Tox.Com*. 1997. University of South Florida. 13 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.chem-tox.com/pregnancy/pregmsg.htm>>.
- Saleh, Huda. "MSG Found to Injure Retina." *Rense.Com*. 31 Dec. 2002. 13 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.rense.com/general33/found.htm>>.
- Van Buren, Ruth. "MSG or Monosodium Glutamate and Obesity." *Ion Life*. 6 April 2008 <<http://www.ionizers.org/msg.html>>.