



Poisoning for Profit

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After the first article about the food industry's increasing use of substances like flavor enhancer monosodium glutamate (MSG) or the sweetener aspartame, a number of people objected that they cannot figure out what is safe to eat anymore. (see the sidebar "Eliminating Excitotoxins = The Joy of Cooking").

One rule of thumb most nutritionally savvy consumers use is the more a food is treated or processed -- to make it more tasty, higher in protein, longer-lasting or easier to ship and store -- the more it is typically stepped on, thus producing excitotoxins. So the bottom line is, eat less highly processed food.

Booting Bragg Amino Acids off the shelf of acceptable products, as recommended by www.MSGTruth.org in the first article, was a major disappointment for many of us who have been squirting it on as a "healthy" salt substitute. Braggs Apple Cider, however, is still considered the best, healthiest cider on the market. One objection to avoiding Braggs Amino Acids was the understanding that Braggs is a "nonfermented" soy-sauce alternative, thus typically considered safe from MSG because it is not processed. We checked with Bragg and got basically nowhere.

Sandy Enriquez of Bragg Food Company in Santa Barbara, Calif., said on April 10 that the company does not release statements about the processing of their products because it is patented information. She did say, however, that only water and soybeans are in their soy sauce and the product is never heated above 99 degrees Fahrenheit, even in their bottling process; thus contradicting any processing or fermentation problems responsible for freeing excitotoxins in food. Plus, their labeling states that their soy sauce contains monosodium glutamic acid.

An e-mail to MSGtruth.org regarding Braggs' statement that their Amino Acids soy sauce should not be on the list of MSG-containing foods was resoundingly disputed by Carol A. Hoernlein, founder of the Web site.

Ubiquitous excitotoxins

Finding processed food without excitotoxins is, right now, nearly impossible because it is found in textured vegetable protein (TVP) and soy protein, which next to water, are probably the most ubiquitous ingredients in organic and inorganic foods. You'll find TVPs in protein and candy bars, cereals, breads, soups, sauces, dips and even baby food, to name a few.

So what, some people ask, is the big deal with getting protein from soy or vegetables or yeast?

Roanne Lewis, a whole foods proponent working at Cid's Food Market supplements department who spoke to The Taos News a few times in the weeks prior to the first article's publication, said the big deal here is that the MSG found in TVP are nerve stimulants that are especially risky for sensitive populations. Data describing these excitotoxin effects are documented in hundreds of scientific and medical studies, beginning as far back as 1969.

America's protein addiction

Processed soy products are one of the biggest health fallacies of our time, Lewis wrote in an e-mail March 14. "They just are not what we, America, have made them out to be. We are a nation stuck on protein consumption and fast food."

Soybeans, naturally, have one of the highest glutamate levels of any of the plant products, Dr. Russell Blaylock, medical researcher and author of three books on health and the effects of neurotoxins, said in a Sept. 27, 2006, interview on www.newstarget.com.

When soaked or processed in water, the glutamates are released and the soy protein isolates out, resulting in glutamate levels higher than in many MSG products. When a person consumes MSG, Blaylock said glutamate levels in the blood can rise as high as 20-fold.

"Yet the vegetarians are just eating it like it's the healthiest thing in the world," Blaylock said, adding that a 25-year study with serial CT scans revealed that, "the people who consumed the most soybean products had the greatest incidence of dementia and brain atrophy."

FDA stamp of approval

Nonetheless, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has ruled MSG to be a basically harmless substance despite the growing body of research on excitotoxins to the contrary, because glutamates are natural substances found both in the body and in foods like seaweed, where it was first discovered, as well as very ripe tomatoes, processed cheese and meat, peas and more.

Further confusing the landscape is the fact that MSG sensitivity is a very mixed bag. Some people are extremely sensitive and react strongly and predictably to MSG, while others do not.

"You're stimulating all of the glutamate receptors," Blaylock said, which, besides the brain, are found in the electrical system of the heart and throughout the intestinal tract. "That's why some people get explosive diarrhea, because it stimulates the receptors in the esophagus and small bowel. Others may develop irritable bowel or if they have it, makes it a lot worse. If they

have reflux it makes that a lot worse."

So even taking lactose-free soy milk won't help many lactose-intolerant people because the MSG causes much worse symptoms than lactose intolerance, as seen in the violent diarrhea which frequently leads to mucous stools, caused by the glutamic acids in soy milk and soy coffee creamers.

While she personally prefers to avoid tofu, soy hot dogs, soy milk and the like, Lewis said on April 7 that she cannot categorically say whether avoiding soy in its fermented or non-fermented forms is beneficial or not, because the research is not conclusive at this point.

Soy is not health food

The fact that Americans equate "soy" with "health food," however, is a major debacle raised by numerous researchers, including Blaylock, who first blew the whistle on excitotoxins in his 1996 blockbuster book, "Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills" (Softcover; \$17.95).

That book and subsequent research implicates excitotoxins in numerous disease conditions, including the rise of sudden cardiac death in athletes, whose lowered post-exercise magnesium levels make them much more susceptible to MSG-induced cardiac irritability and cardiac death (so skip diet drinks with aspartame before working out).

"These people are destroying their nervous system," Blaylock said, "and I talked to a lot of them who complained of severe migraine headaches. I said, 'Get off the soy,' and they do, and that migraine headache goes away. In addition, you have very high manganese levels, which is toxic to the very same part of the brain that produces Parkinson's. You've got a mixture of toxins with soy products and the people think they are eating a healthy, nutritious product. It's destroying their nervous system, as well as other organs."

Blaylock said excitotoxin producers are terrified this information will get out and hope, that by ignoring it, it will die from lack of attention. The potential withdrawal of the manufacturers' advertising support from the media, however, is the main reason Blaylock said excitotoxins are not better understood or even heard of in mainstream news.

Aggressive cancer metastases, diet drinks and other excitotoxin sweeteners will be looked at in the next article of the series, "Poisoning for profit."

Your comments about this series are most welcome. To comment, please e-mail: vclark@taosnews.com.

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