

Sweet and Deadly

By Susan Esposito, DC, DACNB, FABES, FACFN

In our quest to appease our sweet tooth without gaining exorbitant amounts of weight, we have allowed chemical corporations to manufacture artificial compounds to enhance the sweetness of our food, but at what cost? The most notorious of these artificial sweeteners is a chemical compound called aspartame. Aspartame was approved for restricted use in dry foods initially in 1981. In 1983 it was first used in sodas, and in 1996 it was approved for use for general purposes. Aspartame is also known by its brand names, which are NutraSweet, Equal, Sweet One, and Spoonful. Acesulfame potassium is another name for the ingredient aspartame. Currently, in the United States, 4500 tons of aspartame is used in diet sodas and it is a component in more than 6000 foods all over the world, being consumed by over one billion people.

There is much concern over the safety of ingesting aspartame, due in large part by the chemicals from which it is synthesized. The three main chemicals making up aspartame are phenylalanine (50%), aspartic acid (40%), and methanol (10%). There are potential problems with high levels of these ingredients in our body. Levels of phenylalanine that are excessive in our brain can create a decrease in the level of serotonin (an important neurotransmitter), which in turn can create depression and other emotional disorders. Aspartic acid, in excess, can wreak havoc with the metabolism of neurotransmitters in the brain. It is an excitotoxin that can create excessive firing of neurons and can eventually cause neuronal cell death. Most troubling of the ingredients is methanol. Methanol in our bloodstream travels to the brain, muscle, fat, and nervous tissue, where it is metabolized, thus forming a new chemical named formaldehyde, which is known better as embalming fluid. Formaldehyde is an established carcinogen (cancer-causing agent).

Aspartame ingestion has been associated with many deleterious symptoms including: dizziness, headaches, behavioral changes, hallucinations, depression, nausea, numbness, muscle spasms, weight gain, rashes, fatigue, irritability, insomnia, vision problems, hearing loss, heart palpitations, breathing difficulties, anxiety attacks, slurred speech, loss of taste, tinnitus, vertigo, memory loss, and joint pain. Ironically, it is been shown in some research studies to actually cause weight gain

Since its introduction into our marketplace, aspartame has been the subject of many research studies. It is one of the most extensively tested food ingredients. Although many studies confirm the safety of aspartame as a result of their research, there are others that have shown carcinogenic effects of ingestion of aspartame. One of the limitations of the studies that suggest that aspartame consumption is safe is that they are short-term studies. However, in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, a study was published in December 2012 that was entitled, *Consumption of artificial sweetener – and sugar-containing soda and risk of lymphoma and leukemia in men and women*, by the author Eva Schernhammer, et.al., which is the only long term study to show results of aspartame consumption. The researchers in this study reviewed the diet, including aspartame intake, and rates of cancer of over 77,000 women and 47,000 men. These people were studied for a period of 22 years, amassing 2,278,396 person-years of data.

The astonishing results of this long term study show that drinking just one 12 fluid ounce can of diet soda per day leads to an increased risk of leukemia in both men and women combined by 42%, and increased risk of multiple myeloma, in men only, by 102%, and an increased risk of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, in men only, by 31%. The

researchers in the study hypothesized that the reason the cancer rates are higher in men than women may be due to the higher enzymatic activity of alcohol dehydrogenase type 1 (ADH) in men, which potentially can cause higher conversion rates from methanol to formaldehyde.

The results of the study suggest that we may want to avoid aspartame in our daily diet. However, if you're considering returning to sugar sweetened soda as an alternative, you should know that this same study found that drinking one or more sugar sweetened sodas per day increased the risk of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, in men only, by 66%. This is even a higher percentage than the artificially sweetened and soda.

So what is a weight-conscious person with a sweet tooth to do? The healthiest sugar-alternative sweetener that I have found is stevia. It comes from a South American plant and has not been associated with all the detrimental side effects of manufactured artificial sweeteners. Life Grocery has many products available that are sweetened with stevia, as well as several different types of stevia. These foods and beverages are tasty and low calorie, and not associated with the risks of other artificial sweeteners.

Resources:

<http://tinyurl.com/aspartame-effects>

<http://tinyurl.com/aspartame-effects-withdrawal>

<http://aspartame.mercola.com/>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23097267>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16507461>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17805418>

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Foods That Help Prevent Inflammation and Pain

By René Oswald, RN, APH

Whether you suffer from arthritis or occasional joint pain, making a few dietary changes could make a world of difference for you. Following are some of the foods that may help alleviate pain in your life:

Sea vegetables, such as kelp, kombu, wakame, and arame: Avoid processed seaweed snacks which are laden with salt and oil and verify that your source of sea vegetables come from unpolluted waters.

Ginger, turmeric, and wasabi: These plants are all anti-inflammatory and tasty to add to juices, soups, and salad dressings.

Spirulina: Research confirms that the proteins in spirulina inhibit the production and release of histamine, which is a chemical that ignites an inflammatory response in the body. Unfortunately, spirulina is very difficult to digest and therefore is often not assimilated well in the body. The good news is that when spirulina is fermented it has already undergone the process to break it down and can therefore be efficiently used in the body. The Body Ecology company is a great source for fermented spirulina.

Flax seeds, walnuts, hemp seeds, and chia seeds: These are all plant-based fats which are high in omega-3 fats. Avoid polyunsaturated oils, such as safflower, soybean, corn, and sunflower oils, that are high in omega-6 fats. These oils have also been linked to heart disease and cancer.

Shitake and maitake mushrooms: These fungi are anti-inflammatory and are best eaten raw or lightly steamed. Avoid deep-fried mushrooms, since most of the important healing compounds in the mushrooms are destroyed and the oil used in frying is an inflammatory food.

Papaya: This fruit contains papain, which is a protein-digesting enzyme that helps reduce inflammation.

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Pineapple: This fruit contains bromelain, which has anti-inflammatory properties and is used in many anti-inflammatory supplements for arthritis.

Blueberries, cranberries, strawberries, and raspberries: These berries are all high in antioxidants that offer anti-inflammatory protection. Conventional berries have very high levels of pesticides; therefore it's always best to purchase the organic variety.

Broccoli, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, and dark leafy greens: These vegetables are all very beneficial and are the most nutrient-dense when eaten raw or fermented.

Most fresh fruits and vegetables are anti-inflammatory; the ones mentioned are just a few that have been studied the most. You might want to consider avoiding nightshades, which contain high levels of alkaloids and are reported to cause inflammation for many arthritis sufferers. The nightshade veggies are tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants and bell peppers.

When purchasing dried fruits, buy the ones that are free of sulphur dioxide, which is a preservative that has been linked to respiratory conditions and migraine headaches.

Those who suffer from rheumatoid arthritis or any other inflammatory joint disease should:

- Get genetically tested for gluten sensitivity and food allergies
- Work with a health care professional who is knowledgeable in plant-based nutritional counseling and a rotating diet plan.
- Remove sugar, dairy, soy, peanuts, and other legumes from the diet (these foods tend to be high in lectins)

Those that adapt to eating a plant-based diet for joint pain relief are always amazed at the myriad of other benefits they encounter from changing their diet. I've never encountered anyone that regrets making the change.

Resources:
<http://tinyurl.com/no2vzmu> (Nutritionfacts.org)

*René Oswald, RN, APH, and author of **Transitioning to Living Cuisine, Juice Feasting for Life, Living Cuisine for Happy Holidays, and Wholesome Cooked Creations**. She travels around the country teaching her **Transitioning to Living Cuisine Program**. She has several free videos and an informative Blog that you can check out at her website and Health Coaching Forum at <http://RawFoodRene.com>.*

*The Life Line
is a bi-monthly
publication of*



Hours:	Store	Café
Mon-Sat	9am-8pm	Mon-Sun 11 am-4 pm
Sunday	11am-6pm	

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Navigating Menopause Gracefully

By Kim Strickland, ND

Menopause comes from the Greek *meno* (month, menses) and *pausis* (pause). There is much potential for tapping into a woman's power during this 6-13 year phase of life. The role of a menopausal or postmenopausal woman, is to go forth and reseed the community with her concentrated truth and wisdom. In native cultures, menopausal women are understood to retain their "wise blood" and are, therefore, considered more powerful than menstruating women.

During this time women may complete tasks which they started in adolescence. Women may grieve the loss of unrealized dreams. Women become powerful forces against anything that stifles who they are now capable of becoming.

It is important to take time to do the things that restore you and bring you enjoyment in life. You may find a new creative outlook like painting or writing. Allow yourself time to do what you want to do.

Adrenal Function

Adrenal function is key and needs to be addressed if you have these symptoms: you awaken feeling groggy, you can't get going without caffeine, you rely on sugary snacks and caffeine to get through the day, though exhausted you have difficulty falling asleep, and interest in sex may decrease.

Make a list of your most important activities and let everything else go. Say "no" if doing it will deplete you. Get to bed by 10 pm to restore your adrenals. Accept nurturance and affection from others. How should you eat? Avoid sugar and caffeine. Get enough protein. Get light to moderate exercise, but make sure you don't feel depleted. The following supplements may help you feel better:

- Vit C – 500 mg – 2000 mg daily divided over the day
- B5 – 500 – 1000 mg daily, divided over the day
- B complex – at least 25-50 mg
- Magnesium – 300-400 mg daily, divided over the day
- One high quality multivitamin-mineral a day
- DHEA – 5 mg twice daily – this may make you feel like yourself – essential for energy, vitality, and sex drive
- Nettle tea – drink daily to help restore adrenal function and balance your system
- Siberian ginseng – try 100 mg twice a day. Take second dose before 2pm as it is stimulating.

Do this exercise:

- Stop yourself and observe your emotional state.
- Name what is bothering you and write it down.
- Focus on your heart area.
- Shift your attention to a happy, funny, or uplifting person, event, or place and imagine it for a few moments.
- Bring something to mind that allows you to feel unconditional love or appreciation like a child or a pet and hold that feeling for at least 15 second.
- Now note how you feel different.

Hot Flashes

About 75% of American women will experience hot flashes; 15% will have severe hot flashes. They

can lead to embarrassment, physical discomfort, and can interfere with sleep when they occur overnight.

There are several acupressure points which can help alleviate these. They are K2, Li4, G24.5, and GB20. See <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/acupressure-points-chart.html> to find them. Below you will find supplements which may help as well.

- Black cohosh and hops
- Vit E 100 – 400 IU two times per day
- Citrus bioflavonoids with ascorbic acid – 200 mg 4-6 times daily
- Soy protein, 50 g per day (1/5 of a block of tofu) [Editor's note: Be sure to use organic or GMO-free soy.]
- Herbs that may help – Siberian ginseng, dong quai, fo-ti, wild yam, chaste tree
- Natural progesterone cream

Vaginal Dryness, Irritation and Thinning

Vaginal dryness is uncomfortable, increases susceptibility to vaginal and urinary tract infections, and has a negative impact on sexual experience with both physical and psycho-emotional ramifications.

- Black cohosh, dandelion leaves, oat straw – taken orally
- Use natural lubricants such as *Oh Warming Lubricant*
- Testosterone ½ mg-1 mg transdermally or as a vaginal cream, daily or every third day, will restore vaginal mucosa without excessive estrogen levels
- Pueraria mirifica – this can also help with hot flashes. It is a breast enhancer.
- Maca
- Cranberry capsules and unsweetened juice for urinary health

Anxiety, Heart Palpitations, Fogginess, and Insomnia

Heart palpitations are a common disturbing symptom in otherwise healthy perimenopausal women, though cardiac and thyroid problems should be ruled out. Memory difficulties may occur as a function of hormonal changes, and are worsened by lack of sleep and emotional stress. For many women, this is the most disconcerting symptom. Insomnia is a common problem, and lack of sleep aggravates stress, memory loss, depression, and physical discomfort. Try walking, meditating, journaling, and being kind to yourself first.

- Motherwort, vitex, passionflower – herbs which promote hormonal balance and relaxation.
- Eleuthero – an adaptogen used to increase mental alertness and performance, enhance concentration, increase energy and stamina, reduce stress and fatigue, reduce dream-disrupted sleep and insomnia, enhance immunity, and improve detoxification. It is anabolic, which means it helps build muscle and prevents the breakdown of muscle as we age.
- Shatavari – a powerful rejuvenating tonic for women. It is nourishing and calming, as well as hormonally balancing; it is used for irritability and many hormonal imbalances affecting the mood, for example, emotional symptoms of PMS and menopause. It is also

used as a fertility tonic and may be used for vaginal dryness, low libido, and sleep problems in perimenopause.

- Rhodiola – helps promote a calm emotional state and supports strong mental performance, optimal immune function, and hormonal balance. It is a key adaptogen for reducing anxiety. It improves mental and physical stamina, improves sleep, and reduces stress, "burn out," and irritability.
- Holy basil (tulsi) – used to improve energy and relieve fatigue, for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant actions, and to lower blood glucose, triglycerides, and cholesterol.
- Ashwaghandha – considered both a food and a tonic medicine for improving energy, memory and learning, promoting libido, and preventing premature aging. It is used to improve sleep, reduce anxiety, improve memory, and reduce inflammation and oxidative stress (damage from inflammation).

Bone-Health Program

There is a direct relationship between the lack of estrogen during perimenopause and menopause and the development of osteoporosis. When a woman reaches menopause, her estrogen levels drop and can lead to bone loss. For some women, this bone loss is rapid and severe. The amount of bone you have when you reach menopause will affect your chances of getting osteoporosis. Women can lose up to 20% of their bone density during the 5-7 years following menopause. To help prevent this and build bone consider trying some of the following prior to and during menopause.

- Do two to three 40 minutes of weight bearing exercises per week
- Eliminate phosphates (sodas)
- Limit caffeine
- Vit D3 1000-2000 IU per day
- Beta carotene (15 mg) 25,000 IU per day
- Natural progesterone cream
- Vit C 2000 mg per day
- Magnesium 300-000 mg per day
- Calcium 1000-1500 mg depending on diet
- Oatstraw tea with a pinch of horsetail builds bone

As you can see menopause is not one size fits all. There are a plethora of symptoms and no woman will navigate through this life change in the same way. Take time to nourish the relationship you have with yourself and support yourself both physically, nutritionally, and emotionally. Eat well and listen to your body. In the next article I will share homeopathics which are helpful during this life change.

Resources:

www.avivaromm.com

www.drhomeo.com

Northrup, Christiane, *Women's Body's Women's Wisdom*, 2010

Kim Strickland earned her doctorate degree in Natural Health from Clayton College of Natural Health in 2005. She is currently a stay-at-home mother to three boys, as well as an online college mathematics professor at South University Online.

Neurogenetics Reversed

Dr. Kal Sellers DC, MH

Neurogenetics is the study of how genetics affects the development of the nervous system. Modern research into epigenetics (the idea that genetics are the outcome of the environment inside and outside the body or at least that genetic expression is affected by these forces) has begun to question the absolutism of genetics, including neurogenetics. In this article, we will discuss the disagreement and point to practical work being done that appears to alter genetics.

In the year that Dr. Frances Pottenger turned 31 years old, he began his famous study on cats and nutrition. In 1942 he completed the study. He continued to teach about his discoveries throughout the remainder of his life. The results can now be viewed in a republication of the entire study and his conclusions under the title *Pottenger's Cats*. Some other writers later called his work "Pottenger's Prophecy" because he predicted the outcome of eating processed food and how long it would take to reverse the effects once they had set in. Though his study was with cats, his information clearly applies to humans as we can readily see around us.

His cats went from a relatively uniform size and ideal health on 100% whole, raw food, to being widely varied in appearance and developing an equally wide array of diseases—all diseases common to modern humans—when put on cooked food diets. The gestation and birth was more difficult for the cats of the first generation eating cooked food, but the process got increasingly difficult until the cooked food cats became either totally sterile or unable to produce viable offspring. This occurred by the third generation. At the time, humans were only in the second generation of really eating processed, food but his work has borne itself out in modern humans, even though we continue to get some raw food (slowing our own degeneration).

The interesting thing to our topic is that the cats appeared to become genetically diverse with diverse diseases appearing in parents and made worse in the children. When put back on healthy diets, the cats capable of healing would gradually heal, the offspring would become healthier and the apparent "genetic" diversity would begin to disappear.

We can just about stop the discussion here. The reality of our genetic diseases and conditions is that they are not genetic at all. Indeed, the rather bold conclusion is that genetics themselves are either an adaptation to the environment (or maybe a code for adapting to the environment) or it is merely a transcription tool for making a body based on some stored intelligence elsewhere in the body. This transcription tool either makes a healthy or a sick body based on the resources available and the stimulation present at the time. It is a repeating transcription tool intended to be slow to change in order to maintain homeostasis. This backfires when the homeostasis is actually undesirable. Then we want it to be changeable and fast, rather than in two more generations.

The discussion does not stop here, however, so let us go on.

Somewhat recently, a product by Patakara that was developed in Japan—a lip exerciser of sorts—was shown to have the potential to reverse the effects of Down's syndrome. The device stimulates the neural synapses in the brain allowing the central nervous system to regain control of the dissociated parts of the body. Many diseases have been helped with the device.

This research postulates that neurology has a greater impact on genetic expression than genes do. Indeed the real "genetics" may be stored in our neurology, or

neurological patterns. DNA may simply be a stable medium for transcription of codes into physical bodies. Neurological patterns are easily transferred from both parents from conception to adulthood. It would be somewhat constant, but would also change steadily according to environmental causes and conditions. The ability for this neurology-oriented device (the Patakara lip trainer) to totally change a Down's syndrome case to a healthy specimen of normal intelligence and appearance certainly lends credence to this idea. Is it possible that the neurology of the parents forms the physical structure of the young, including the transcription pattern we call DNA? Can major changes in neurology (beyond a certain threshold) cause rewriting of DNA or more intelligent expression of DNA? Good questions these may be, but they are as yet unanswerable by modern science. Unfortunately, they are not even being studied seriously because DNA is considered such an absolute creator of the structure and function of life.

Of course, perhaps more than answering this question, we just want to know what to do to get well, to change our genetics and to have healthy children. These tools here discussed are some of the most potent at the present time. Let us discuss the last one and then revisit what to do about it all.

In this next study, genetically fat rats and genetically thin rats were brought together and intestinal flora experiments were conducted (this has recently appeared on TED talks). These rats were initially raised in a bubble and protected from exposure to microorganisms. Later, fecal transplants were performed taking the feces (and the microbiome pattern) from both fat and thin rats to see the effect.

The microbiome from fat rats was able to cause the thin rats to get fatter and the microbiome from thin rats was able to cause the fat rats to become thinner with a very high rate of success in this study. Later, microbiome (more fun to say than feces) transplants were done with fat and thin humans into the rats. The effect was the same.

The process of fecal transplants being somewhat uncomfortable to most people aside, the subject of the absolutism of genetics arises again and is questioned. The rat study is more detailed than what is presented here and if the reader seriously wants to look at that information, the TED talk by Rob Knight entitled "How our microbes make us who we are" is a reasonable place to start.

Our DNA is 99.9% similar to other humans around us. Our microbiome pattern, however, may only be 10% similar to people around us. The DNA of the microbes affects us and outnumbers our own DNA at a rate of at least 100 to 1. Our microbiome pattern is related to our individual species and our own individuality with about a 95% accuracy. Differences in individual people, including behavior, is, at least in part, a product of our microbiome pattern. Variations in what proportions and what individual subspecies of microbes we have will create our health, the level of toxicity we have when exposed to toxic chemicals, the likelihood of being bitten by bugs, and the response of our immune system to myriad influences.

Currently, by looking at the microbes in the gut, we can tell with 90% accuracy who is obese. With the whole human genome we can only predict obesity with about a 60% accuracy. Currently mice can be protected from gaining excess weight by giving them a specific pattern of microorganisms.

Aside from the obvious need to protect the microbiome of children as sacred, the whole study lends

itself to the question at the beginning: "Does our DNA actually dictate or is it just a reference manual that gets constantly rewritten and that may be intentionally rewritten by changing our guts and changing our neurology?"

This article is mostly made up of postulates and questions to encourage the otherwise victim-minded person to consider that maybe it is not the "realistic" point of view to view one's self as just "genetically" sick, fat, weak, or whatever. Unfortunately, we have considered genetics to be a cruel master to the weak for too long.

Here are just seven practical points we can take home from this article today:

Consider anything to help brain health, including the Japanese Lip Trainer, exercise, Tai Chi, Chiropractic and herbal supplements to help the brain.

Consider getting a dog that gets to spend some time outside. This contribution will affect both microbiome health and neurological health. Stop sterilizing everything.

Keep up on fecal transplant technology and options. It might turn out to be a reasonable option that can be done at home or near you.

Learn about pre-biotic foods that help to promote a healthier pattern in the microbiome. Learn about chemistry of a healthy gut and encourage it with proper diet. The gut should be acidic, not alkaline like the blood.

Get on 100% whole, mostly raw food and never leave it. Keep kids on it.

Avoid antibiotics unless it really is a life-threatening situation. Many herbalists, homeopathic practitioners, and other natural healers may be able to provide other options about 99% of the time! Do NOT give antibiotics to kids unless it is life threatening. If an antibiotic must be given, choose members of the penicillin family, which is far less toxic than other types in use today.

Carefully consider the research questioning vaccinations. The chemicals from vaccines have been found in the gut and cause abnormal irritation of the nervous system and the gut chemistry in those areas. A normal microbiome cannot be sustained in that situation.

This information opens the possibility of healing that we previously were closed to. It even helps us have a possible focus that might prove very helpful to healing many serious problems that are currently approached with little success.

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