

Artificial Sweeteners, Your Brain, and Weight Loss

Madison Avenue is genius. They could sell us Agent Orange in a little packet and tell us with a smiley face that it will make us younger, healthier, and slimmer, and we would open our wallets and spill billions of dollars into their coffers. It's basically what happened with aspartame and now Splenda. When I see the ads on TV for Splenda—and I worked on TV commercials for ten years—I marvel at the production values (casting, hair, makeup, wardrobe, sets, and locations), the gorgeous cinematography, but most of all the brilliant presentation of lies.

David Chase, the creator of "The Sopranos" said, "The function of an hour drama is to reassure the American people that it's OK to go out and buy stuff. It's all about flattering the audience and making them feel as if all the authority figures have our best interests at heart."

More and more women are questioning whether they should follow the recommendations of these so-called authority figures. At a Peace Summit in Vancouver a year ago, the Dalai Lama floored the sold-out crowd by proclaiming, "The world will be saved by the Western Woman." He's right about that. Because today's American women are rebelling and doing their own research into what's healthy and what's not. It's not easy to get to the truth because there's a lot of misinformation out there, and Madison Avenue is on a rampage to get us to continue consuming products like aspartame and Splenda so that we'll continue to pour billions of dollars into the bank accounts of food, diet, and drug corporations.

Let's look at the facts about artificial sweeteners. Aspartame is made from three components: phenylalanine (an amino acid), aspartic acid (an excito-toxic amino acid) and methanol, a toxic alcohol. All three are poisonous to the nervous system and cells. Aspartame metabolizes into formaldehyde, which is known to be a powerful cancer-causing agent and can lead to neurodegenerative diseases. Studies show that aspartame dramatically increases the risk of leukemias and lymphomas. Aspartame is thought to be behind the dramatic increase in breast, pancreatic, prostate, thyroid, liver, lung, uterine, and ovarian tumors. Another metabolic breakdown product is diketopiperazine, another carcinogenic, which may account for the 4,700 percent increase in brain tumors in the last decade.

Now let's look at weight loss. Aspartame is an amino acid "excito-toxin" that facilitates a cascade of chemical reactions in the brain that end with the rapid and uncontrollable firing of synapses resulting in the death of brain cells and the generation of free radicals. Free radicals damage mitochondria. Mitochondria are the little energy factories in your cells. As they are damaged and "shut down" your metabolism becomes less efficient resulting in weight gain.

In addition to free radical damage of mitochondria, the body responds to aspartame exactly as it does to sugar resulting in a drop in blood sugar and the accompanying cravings for foods high in calories and carbs. That's one reason why aspartame is linked to obesity and "metabolic syndrome" (insulin resistance/obesity/type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and abnormal blood lipids). The other reason is that aspartame metabolizes into formaldehyde, which degrades cellular structures. People who drink a lot of diet drinks containing aspartame are flabby with a lot of cellulite.

Splenda (sucralose) is not an alternative as it is a chlorinated molecule and chlorine is definitively linked to cancer. Before cancer sets in, you'll have a lot of mitochondrial damage (and a less efficient metabolism).

So what can you do if you want to lose weight? Unhealthy brains crave and demand sugar and refined carbs. The best way to control your weight is to control what I call your "big dumb pet"—your brain. I know that sounds funny, but you can control your brain by feeding it a diet of real food, especially healthy fats. The brain is 60 percent fat. The body doesn't differentiate but uses whatever fats are onboard to build brain cells. If you eat unhealthy fats, you will have an unhealthy brain. If you eat real food and healthy fats, your brain can rebuild in a healthy way. As your brain is being rebuilt with healthy building materials, it will also be flooded with happy, healthy neurotransmitters.