

The Not So Good, The Bad, & The Ugly:

A Bittersweet Research About Artificial Sweeteners^{1 & 2} Part 2

Gathered and Edited by Pastor A. A. Jackson, Realm of Agape Christian Church, Inc.

Do you use any of those seemingly neighborhood friendly little pink (Sweet & Low®), yellow (Splenda®), and blue (Equal®) packets of artificial sugar? Well, consider this professionally documented information...

The Secret Dangers of Splenda (Sucralose), an Artificial Sweetener³



Is Splenda Really As Safe As They Claim It to Be?

As of 2006, only six human trials have been published on Splenda (sucralose). Of these six trials, only two of the trials were completed and published before the FDA approved sucralose for human consumption. The two published trials had a grand total of 36 total human subjects.

36 people sure doesn't sound like many, but wait, it gets worse, only 23 total were actually given sucralose for testing and here is the real killer:

The longest trial at this time had lasted only four days and looked at sucralose in relation to tooth decay, not human tolerance.

Why Do You Need to Know About Splenda?

Splenda, best known for its marketing logo, "made from sugar so it tastes like sugar," has taken the sweetener industry by storm. Splenda has become the nations number one selling artificial sweetener in a very short period of time.

Between 2000 and 2004, the percentage of US households using Splenda products jumped from 3 to 20 percent. In a one year period, Splenda sales topped \$177 million compared with \$62 million spent on aspartame-based Equal and \$52 million on saccharin-based Sweet 'N Low.

McNeil Nutritionals, in their marketing pitch for Splenda emphasizes that Splenda has endured some of the most rigorous testing to date for any food additive. Enough so to convince the average consumer that it is in fact safe. They claim that over 100 studies have been conducted on Splenda. What they don't tell you is that most of the studies are on animals.

Additional Concerns About Splenda Studies

There have been no long-term human toxicity studies published until **after** the FDA approved sucralose for human consumption. Following FDA approval a human toxicity trial was conducted, but lasted only three months, hardly the length of time most Splenda users plan to consume sucralose. No studies have ever been done on children or pregnant women.

Much of the controversy surrounding Splenda does not focus just on its safety, but rather on its false advertising claims. The competition among sweeteners is anything but sweet. The sugar industry is

¹ As retrieved 3/21/07 from <http://www.mercola.com>

² As retrieved 3/21/07 from <http://www.perfectlyhealthy.net>

³ Retrieved 3/29/07 from http://www.mercola.com/2000/dec/3/sucralose_dangers.htm

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currently suing McNeil Nutritionals for implying that Splenda is a natural form of sugar with no calories.

Is It REALLY Sugar?

There is no question that sucralose starts off as a sugar molecule, it is what goes on in the factory that is concerning. Sucralose is a synthetic chemical that was originally cooked up in a laboratory. In the five step patented process of making sucralose, three chlorine molecules are added to a sucrose or sugar molecule. A sucrose molecule is a disaccharide that contains two single sugars bound together; glucose and fructose.

The chemical process to make sucralose alters the chemical composition of the sugar so much that it is somehow converted to a fructo-galactose molecule. This type of sugar molecule does not occur in nature and therefore your body does not possess the ability to properly metabolize it. As a result of this "unique" biochemical make-up, McNeil Nutritionals makes it's claim that Splenda is not digested or metabolized by the body, making it have zero calories.

It is not that Splenda is naturally zero in calories. If your body had the capacity to metabolize it then it would no longer have zero calories.

How Much Splenda is Left In Your Body After You Eat It?

If you look at the research (which is primarily extrapolated from animal studies) you will see that in fact 15% of sucralose is absorbed into your digestive system and ultimately is stored in your body. To reach a number such as 15% means some people absorb more and some people absorb less. In one human study, one of the eight participants did not excrete any sucralose even after 3 days. Clearly his body was absorbing and metabolizing this chemical. That is what our bodies are supposed to do.

The bottom line is that we all have our own unique biochemical make-up. Some of you will absorb and metabolize more than others. If you are healthy and your digestive system works well, you may be at higher risk for breaking down this product in your stomach and intestines. Please understand that it is impossible for the manufacturers of Splenda to make any guarantees based on their limited animal data.

If you feel that Splenda affects you adversely, it is valid. Don't let someone convince you that it is all in your head. You know your body better than anyone else.

How to Determine if Splenda is Harming You

The best way to determine if Splenda or sucralose is affecting you is to perform an elimination/challenge with it. First eliminate it and other artificial sweeteners from your diet completely for a period of one to two weeks. After this period reintroduce it in sufficient quantity.

For example, use it in your beverage in the morning, and eat at least two sucralose containing products the remainder of the day. On this day, avoid other artificial sweeteners so that you are able to differentiate which one may be causing a problem for you. Do this for a period of one to three days. Take notice of how your body is feeling, particularly if it feels different than when you were artificial sweetener free.

Splenda May Still Be Harming You

If you complete the elimination/challenge trial described above and do not notice any changes then it appears you are able to tolerate Splenda acutely. However, please understand that you are not out of the woods yet.

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The entire issue of long-term safety has never been established. Let's look at the facts again:

- There have only been six human trials to date
- The longest trial lasted three months
- At LEAST 15% of Splenda is not excreted from your body in a timely manner

Considering that Splenda bears more chemical similarity to DDT (see appendix) than it does to sugar, are you willing to bet your health on this data? Remember that fat-soluble substances, such as DDT, can remain in your fat for decades and devastate your health.

If the above facts don't concern you because you believe the FDA would not ever allow a toxic substance into the market then read on.

Do You Really Believe These People Are Going to Protect You?

Please consider that the only organizations between you and potentially toxic side effects are the FDA and the manufacturers of sucralose (Tate & Lyle) and of Splenda (McNeil Nutritionals).

The FDA has a long standing history of ineffective screening and rampant conflict of interests as demonstrated in their inability to identify Vioxx as too dangerous to be on the market. This mistake costs 55,000 people their lives.

Now the point I want you to understand here, because it is really important, is that Splenda is not a drug and is only a food additive. As such the number of studies required to receive FDA approval is substantially less than drug. Vioxx had an order of magnitude of more comprehensive clinical trials than Splenda ever did, and despite this rigorous approval process it still killed 55,000 people.

So, now you have the primary concerns I have about Splenda and the choices is yours.

Read Splenda Horror Stories

We have more people on our site that have reported adverse reaction to Splenda than were formally studied in the research submitted for FDA approval. It would seem this collection of data is in some ways superior to the data submitted to the FDA for Splenda approval.

You can help us continue our Splenda research by supplying us with your own experience. *If you or anyone you know have had an adverse reaction to Splenda or sucralose containing products please tell us your story...*

Dear Dr. Mercola,

I want to thank you for your Web site and especially for your documentation on the dangers of Splenda. I also want to pass on this testimonial in the hope it may help others.

Last evening after dinner I began to feel flush. My husband commented how red my face was getting and, sure enough, one glance in the mirror confirmed a bright red, tight, shiny visage staring back at me. In the next few hours my eyes began to swell. I went to bed hoping I could "sleep it off." How wrong I was. This morning I got up and my face was still red, bright and swollen with puffy eyes. I am a pharmacist and I have seen many anaphylactoid (allergic) reactions before. I began to feel concerned that I too was having one. I have had only one other reaction like this before in my life--to Bactrim. I went out for my usual morning run but by the first quarter mile I could barely breathe so I walked slowly back to the house. My right shoulder was burning so I went to the mirror and was horrified to find a HUGE 6 inch by 3 inch welt at the base of my neck (see photo below).

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I also felt very panicky and shaky and immediately had two bouts of diarrhea in rapid succession. After 15 minutes and a cool shower on tissue that looked scalded, I was having difficulty breathing. I was seen in the local emergency room where the physician immediately gave me a dexamethasone (steroid) injection in the hip and a prescription for Epi-pen and oral prednisone over four days. At the time I didn't know why I looked like I had ingested a sulfa drug. My husband and I tried to figure out what was different in my life over the last 12 hours. Laundry soap? Nope. Cake? Animal dander? No and no. A dear friend came to visit me in my misery and mentioned that I had started to flush at church, several hours before dinner.

I remembered that I had had a cup of coffee and had tried the new creamer sitting by the pot. I remembered the Splenda label on it, which prompted my husband and I to search the Web and we found your site. The description by Marcia in the testimonial area caused me to burst into tears. Yes, Marcia, there are others like you. I am throwing that stuff out when I get to church! This reaction that I have had looks like a drug reaction! I am appalled an "artificial sweetener" did this to me. Twelve hours after treatment my eyes are no longer swollen and my face is no longer red, but my neck welt is the same size, same redness and as tender as a sunburn. There are a few blisters in the welt. Even after treatment it still looks this bad! Perhaps the manufacturer of Splenda can sell it as a biochemical warfare agent after it is removed from the market as a food additive.

Thanks for getting the word out!

Lori Hunt, RPh

Pickens, SC

Appendix about DDT: DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) is a pesticide once widely used to control insects in agriculture and insects that carry diseases such as malaria. DDT is a white, crystalline solid with no odor or taste. Its use in the U.S. was banned in 1972 because of damage to wildlife, but it is still used in some countries.⁴

⁴ Retrieved 3/31/07 from <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts35.html#bookmark02>