

Aspartame Information

Scientific Authorities the World Over Confirm Aspartame is Safe

Allegations about the popular low calorie sweetener aspartame made in a closing debate at the House of Commons on 14 December appear to be an attempt by Roger Williams to obtain publicity by scaring consumers about a safe and beneficial food ingredient.

By providing sweetness without calories, aspartame can make a useful contribution to weight control. For example, a soft drink sweetened with aspartame can have as little as one Calorie per serving. At a time when governments and the medical profession are increasingly concerned about overweight and obesity, it is unhelpful to raise ill-founded fears about a popular choice which helps people to control their calorie intake. In Europe alone, overweight and obesity are estimated to cause 70,000 new cancer cases every year.

Issues raised by the speakers at the press briefing have been repeatedly reviewed and dismissed by food safety authorities around the world. In 2002, after a review of over 500 documents including scientific papers, conference proceedings and abstracts, the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Food (SCF) reaffirmed the safety of aspartame. The SCF previously reviewed the science on aspartame in 1984, 1988 and 1997. On each of these occasions, the SCF found aspartame to be safe.

In its comments, the SCF wrote "Aspartame is unique among the intense sweeteners in that the intake of its component parts can be compared with intakes of the same substances from natural foods."

Aspartame is one of the most thoroughly tested ingredients in the food supply and has been approved for use by the United States Food and Drug Administration, the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Health Organisation, and by regulatory agencies in more than 130 countries around the world. The US Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of aspartame in foods and drinks no fewer than 26 times.

Aspartame has a unique sugar like taste and is used to sweeten many everyday foods and drinks, including Britain's most popular makes of soft drinks, yogurts, squashes, hot chocolate drinks and chewing gums. The press office of the Liberal Democratic Party confirmed on 12 December 2005 that the ban called for by Mr Williams is not party policy.

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