



Have You Lost Your Mind? (Excitotoxins and the Brain)

What would you do if a part of your body decided to self-destruct? If little by little you lost the ability to use that part of you? What if the part of your body that was committing suicide was your own brain—the most delicate and complex part of what makes you, you? It may surprise you to learn that some of the foods you eat may trigger your brain to do just that.

The brain is made up of **neurons** (*brain cells*). Some neurons connect with other neurons close by; others connect to neurons that are far away. But all neurons are important and have specific functions. If a group of neurons is damaged and no longer works correctly, you could become blind, deaf, or even stupid! Even though your spleen, kidneys, and bones were probably not directly impacted by what you ate for your last meal, your brain was. In fact, every bite you ate directly impacted your brain.

Substances called **excitotoxins** (*poisons that excite*) are especially destructive food additives. Monosodium glutamate (MSG) and aspartame (Nutrasweet®, Equal®) kill neurons. These ingredients excite some cells, making them fire very rapidly. Soon they die of exhaustion. That means that every time you eat something that has those ingredients, you are losing brainpower.

MSG is a chemical that makes food taste good. That's why it's added to most chips, crackers, soups, and meat substitutes. But it is deadly for the brain. On the sweet side, watch out for diet drinks, sugarless gum, and most sugar-free anything. All of these food items gradually destroy the brain, which makes learning and remembering more and more difficult.

Artificial colors, added to many foods to make them look appealing, are also chemicals that impact your brain. For example, some people experience strong allergic reactions to red food coloring. It over-stimulates and makes them sick. To protect your brain, stay away from colored drinks, Kool-Aid, colored candies and cookies, etc. Try grapes instead of Gummy Bears and real juice instead of soda.

Questions for Research:

What other labels are used for MSG?

Read the labels of some common items, like crackers or soup. Which ingredients could damage the brain?

Why would Satan want to promote excitotoxins?

Research Ideas

MSG, aspartame, food coloring, food allergies