About aspartame

“Where does aspartame come from?”

Aspartame is made of amino acids, nature’s building blocks of life. During digestion, the human body breaks down protein-rich foods, such as meat, fish and milk into amino acids. These are then reassembled into the different proteins the body needs to grow and function. Aspartame is made from two of these amino acids. Amino acids are a natural part of our diet from our first days, and the two amino acids in aspartame are also in breast milk.

“What are the benefits of aspartame?”

Aspartame is different from sugar in that only tiny amounts need to be added to provide the same level of sweetness. This means that foods and drinks sweetened with aspartame can contain far fewer calories. And because aspartame is not sugar-based, it does not contribute to the development of tooth decay.
The taste of aspartame

“Why do certain foods and drinks taste sweet?”

Foods such as honey and fruit are naturally sweet, while other foods need to be sweetened by adding sugar. When we eat sweet foods and drinks, the sugars in them lock onto certain taste buds on the tongue. When they are stimulated, these taste buds send messages to the brain telling us we are tasting something sweet. Aspartame locks on to the taste buds in the same way as sugar, honey or fruit.

“Why do we like sweet-tasting foods and drinks so much?”

“Sweet” is one of the five basic tastes that can be sensed by the tongue. Almost everyone likes sweet-tasting foods and drinks. From our earliest days we enjoy the sweetness of our mother’s milk from the natural sugar, called lactose, that it contains. Many of us enjoy the feeling of comfort that sweet foods provide.

“What does aspartame taste like?”

Aspartame has sweetened foods and drinks for more than 35 years. During that time it has been compared to other sweetening ingredients in numerous taste tests. Time and time again, the people taking part in these tests have preferred the natural-tasting sweetness of aspartame. There is no bitter aftertaste, and most people cannot tell the taste of aspartame from sugar.

Calories and carbohydrates

“What happens if you have too much of a good thing?”

We hear more and more everyday from health experts about the problems associated with being overweight. The foods and drinks we enjoy today are readily available, and most are very affordable. Perhaps most important, we have become less and less active over the years. Most jobs are much more sedentary than in years past, and we are much more likely to ride in cars than to walk. When all of these factors are combined, it’s easy to consume more calories than we burn off, leading to overweight and the health problems that being overweight can bring.

“How can aspartame help?”

A 12-ounce soft drink sweetened with sugar or corn syrup can contain up to 150 Calories, while a can of soda sweetened with aspartame contains only one or two Calories. In the same way, foods sweetened with sugar or corn syrup have a higher calorie content than aspartame-sweetened foods. Every teaspoonful of sugar delivers about 20 Calories. By choosing foods and drinks sweetened with aspartame, we can reduce our calorie and carbohydrate intake, and better control our weight.
Dental health

“How can aspartame help with tooth decay?”

When we consume sugar-sweetened foods or drinks the bacteria we all have in our mouths naturally convert the sugar to mild acid. Over time, if we don’t remove this acid by cleaning our teeth, it wears away the surface enamel on teeth. Eventually small holes are made in the enamel allowing the acid to eat away the softer interior of the tooth more easily, creating a cavity. Since aspartame is not sugar-based, the same bacteria in the mouth do not convert aspartame to cavity-forming acids.

Food and drinks with aspartame

“What sorts of products contain aspartame?”

Aspartame is used in food and drinks to provide the sweet taste of sugar without the calories. These include yogurts, ice cream, frozen desserts, hot chocolate drinks, candies and chewing gum, as well as many soft drinks. Aspartame is also available in powder form to sweeten tea, coffee, cereals, fruit and other foods.

“How can you tell if a food or drink contains aspartame?”

The ingredients which are used to make food and drink products are always labelled on the packaging. Consequently, any product containing aspartame will have it clearly listed on the ingredients panel.
Proven safe

“Who has approved aspartame?”
Aspartame has been used to sweeten foods and beverages for more than 35 years and is one of the most thoroughly tested ingredients in the food supply. More than 200 scientific studies have confirmed that aspartame is safe for the general population, including children and expectant mothers. This scientific research has been examined very carefully and accepted by expert authorities, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the United Kingdom Food Standards Agency and the European Food Safety Authority, all of whom have approved aspartame for use in foods and drinks.

“How many countries have approved aspartame?”
The health and regulatory authorities of more than 100 countries all over the world have approved aspartame. In addition, experts from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization have approved the use of aspartame in foods and drinks.

Contact us
Email: mailbox@aspartame.net
www.aspartame.net

The Aspartame Information Service is provided by Ajinomoto Company. Ajinomoto supplies aspartame to the world’s leading food and drink makers.