

Dying

for a

Diet Coke

Dying for a Diet Coke?

(Alternative title? – We are the laboratory rats!) - How a popular artificial sweetener in all diet drinks, "sugarless" gum & ice-cream & a host of "sugar-free" diet, fitness and drug products, is probably creating health problems for a good number of New Zealanders and Australians.

(NOTE: This is the actual text I sent to INVESTIGATE magazine in New Zealand in August 2007. The reference to Diet Coke in my suggested title was changed by the editor, Ian Wishart, out of fear of possible litigation from Coca Cola and/or its agents in New Zealand, Oasis Industries. Similarly, other product references in this text may have been amended in the INVESTIGATE version of my story. The final panel item referring to the interest of the NZ Security Intelligence Service in Betty Martini was omitted from the INVESTIGATE story, possibly for reasons of space. In my experience (50 years of it), few publications ever permit a story of this length to be used, which of course makes it rather difficult to give proper coverage in one hit to a story as convoluted as aspartame's. So Ian Wishart deserves to be complimented for his courage in airing the issue.)

By Chris Wheeler

" ... I am a Pediatrician, a Professor of Pediatrics at Emory, and have spent 25 years in the biomedical science, trying to prevent mental retardation and birth defects caused by excess phenylalanine. . . . I have considerable concern for the increased dissemination and consumption of the sweetener, aspartame, (1-methyl N-L-a-aspartyl-L- phenylalanine) in our world food supply. This artificial dipeptide is hydrolyzed by the intestinal tract to produce L-phenylalanine which in excess is a known neurotoxin. Normal humans do not metabolize phenylalanine as efficiently as do lower species such as rodents and thus most of the previous studies in Aspartame effects on rats are irrelevant to the question, 'Does phenylalanine excess occur with Aspartame ingestion?'"

Statement by Louis J. Elsas, II, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics, before the USA Senate Committee of Labor and Human Resources on the subject "Nutrasweet: Health and safety concerns", November 3, 1987.

Professor Elsas blew the warning whistle on that popular diet sweetener, aspartame or Additive 951, some 20 years ago now. As he stressed at the time, the rat studies which were used to "prove" aspartame's safety are inappropriate because human beings are not rats, a point which New Zealand and Australian food safety regulators, toxicologists, doctors and politicians still refuse to recognise. We, in possession of a bit more elementary commonsense, may choose to differ on the point of whether we are all being treated as the real laboratory rats by the time the sad – but also absurd - tale of aspartame is finally spelled out in these pages.

Rats are, of course, the basis of food safety "science." We can't afford to kill human beings in the course of supporting food industry profiteering. We use the poor rats – and dogs, cats, rabbits and monkeys – as part of our sad experiments that have seen some 80,000 toxic chemicals introduced for our "convenience" over the past 60 years by industry with often the barest attention paid to long-term health outcomes for actual human beings. Rats are – in a sense - our surrogate consumer advocates: they die on the Cross of science for our sins and bad science makes sinners of us all.

In the meantime it has often become difficult to find anyone in our immediate circle of friends who is really well, while a familiar pattern has developed of alarming new diseases and disorders developing at earlier and earlier ages alongside endemic infertility, an increased rate of birth defects and children and even babies falling sick with cancer – something previously unknown to our forefathers. But so familiar are we with the sea of synthetic chemicals washing around us we never attribute blame to them, in fact we even add them to our food to enhance flavour, "mouth feel", smell, colour and, of course, sweetness – the thing we use aspartame for instead of ordinary old sugar or honey.

But what about our children?

Consider for a moment how many cities around New Zealand and Australia are opening new hospitals and setting up increased facilities especially for treating children who in ever-increasing numbers are going down with what used to be relatively rare adult diseases like diabetes, leukaemia, brain tumours and weird new diseases like autism and hyper-activity that turn tiny kids into monsters. Generations who had children before the 1950s would wonder why we so nonchalantly accept the huge toll of chronic disease in children that now exists, with so little comment and such apparent acceptance of the inevitable.

Meanwhile we carry on feeding ourselves and our children with the thousands of new convenience foods laden with a witch's cauldron of chemical preservatives and additives, convinced by TV advertising and our faith in a vague common social mythology that neither our politicians, our health regulatory bureaucrats nor our complaisant food and beverage industries would deliberately poison us.

Worst of all, many of us are now feeding a new generation of human beings - our babies, our children and our pregnant selves - with a popular synthetic sweetener poison, aspartame/Additive 951 (also known as Nutrasweet, Equal, Spoonful, Benevia, Equal Measure, Canderel, etc), which has been reported in a long series of scientific, peer-reviewed studies as carrying the ability to maim, distort and disable intellectual and physical development from the foetal stage to adolescence. In fact over the 26 years that have passed since aspartame's introduction into the world food chain we are now moving into generations of human beings whose parents and parents' parents have been continuously exposed from breakfast to dinner-time to aspartame, monosodium glutamate and a baneful assemblage of human nervous system toxins that American neurosurgeon Dr Russell Blaylock has termed "excitotoxins", chemical poisons that can over-excite the neural pathways to the point of nerve death. (1)

What is more, while we have finally accepted in our law courts and at a Government level that substances like Agent Orange, lead, and blue asbestos can medically disable particularly where long-term exposures are involved, we seem quite unable to extend that logic to the artificial dietary chemicals that we consume every day, year after year.

Little wonder then, that ill health and classrooms full of medicated children are part of normal, daily life and lunatic murders, road-rage, air-rage, depression and a steady media reportage of odd and irrational behaviour in people of all ages is just put down to "modern living."

Unknown to most of us, and apparently ignored by the authorities we trust, aspartame use has been associated in the scientific literature with a huge list of medical and psychological disorders including irrational rage, headaches, numbness, fatigue, blurred vision and blindness, heart palpitations, brain lesions and tumours, memory loss, dizziness, muscle spasms, choking spasms, miscarriages, sexual dysfunction, irritability, anxiety attacks, vertigo, epileptic seizures, rashes, tachycardia, tinnitus, joint pain, nausea, mood alterations and depression, hearing loss, slurred speech, loss of taste, and insomnia, as well as eroding intelligence and short-term memory. It also helps trigger multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, chronic fatigue syndrome, Epstein Barr, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, mental retardation, lymphoma, and birth defects.

Warning to schools

Since current Labour Party policy is recommending the use of diet products containing aspartame in our schools in order to counteract the growing obesity problem in our increasingly sedentary child population, we should pay attention to this recent warning from Professor Ralph G. Walton, M.D., Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, at the USA's Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine...

To whom it may concern:

Although undoubtedly well intentioned, any attempt to replace sugared beverages with aspartame containing diet products will, in my opinion, have a devastating impact on the health of our children and adolescents. The alarming increase in obesity, type II diabetes, and a wide variety of behavioural difficulties in our children is obviously attributable to multiple factors, but I am convinced that one powerful force in accentuating these problems is the ever increasing use of aspartame.

Aspartame is a multipotential toxin and carcinogen. The dipeptide component of the molecule can alter brain chemistry, significantly changing the ratio of catecholamines to indolamines, with resultant lowering of seizure threshold, production of carbohydrate craving and in vulnerable individuals leading to panic, depressive and cognitive symptoms.

The methyl ester component of aspartame is metabolized to methanol, which in turn is broken down into formic acid and formaldehyde. Methanol can lead to serious eye problems, formic acid and formaldehyde are potent carcinogens.

The diet food industry and the F.D.A. (plus, also, our own NZFSA and FSANZ - ED) are fond of saying that aspartame is "the most studied product in history" with an outstanding safety record. In fact however virtually all of the studies in the medical literature attesting to its safety were funded by the industry, whereas independently funded studies, now numbering close to 100, identify one or more problems.

It would be especially tragic if an attempt to improve the health of our children led to even greater exposure to this highly toxic product.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent public health issue.

Ralph G. Walton, M.D.
Medical Director, Safe Harbor Behavioral Health
Professor of Clinical Psychiatry,
Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine
Adjunct Professor Of Psychiatry
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

NOTE: Dr. Walton's study on aspartame: "Adverse Reactions to Aspartame: Double-Blind Challenge in Patients from a Vulnerable Population," is viewable on the website <http://www.mindfully.org/Health/Aspartame-Adverse-Reactions-1993.htm> and in the folder <http://www.dorway.com/doctors.html#walton>

Junk food addicts in Rotorua put a baby through a spin drier. Apart from "P", was Diet Coke involved? Aspartame reacts with methamphetamine to produce totally lunatic behaviour. The 2002 Lundy murders down in Palmerston North were committed by a husband and father, Mark Lundy, who slugged back over a litre of aspartame-containing beverages every day before finally murdering his wife and daughter. How many of the truckies and car drivers who regularly lose control of their vehicles on straight New Zealand roads or drive onto level crossings in front of approaching trains were consuming one or more of the aspartame products readily available on petrol stop counters?

Airline pilots, using aspartame products to keep down their weight in a sedentary job, report suddenly experiencing dizziness and loss of spatial perception at critical points in landing planes filled with hundreds of the trusting public. Henri Paul, Princess Diana's driver in that fatal Alma Tunnel car smash in Paris, was a heavy Diet Coke consumer and the medical drugs he was taking not only interact negatively with aspartame, but were prescribed in the first place to deal with symptoms probably caused by aspartame use. Tony Blair, George Bush and Bill Clinton all steadily consume Diet Coke according to the evidence of TV news clips. One could say Monica Lewinsky and the whole Iraqi bloodbath is the result of the Clinton/Bush/Blair addiction to aspartame, a chemical closely connected to irrational behaviour.

Aspartame products like Diet Coke, Wrigley's gum, Lemsip, and Roche's fizzy Vitamin B tabs are so constantly advertised on TV and present in our brainwashed lives that we take them for granted and never for a moment examine the hidden implications behind an additive our experts assure us is completely without blame.

And let's not forget little Abby Cormack down in Wellington at this point. Her addiction to sugar-less Wrigley's chewing gum with its direful health consequences occupied our media's fleeting attention span for a few seconds in recent times. Of course the arrival of American anti-aspartame activist Betty Martini in support of Abby's growing campaign wasn't something our newspapers, particularly the NZ Herald, wanted to know about. The media, of course, can't afford to rile Coca Cola's or Wrigley's New Zealand representatives and their law hacks – their aspartame products bring in a huge advertising dollar. In fact the one distinguishing feature of the short-lived anti-aspartame campaign last August/July (2007) was just how the New Zealand media steered clear of giving ANY space to the issue of what Kiwis could be doing to their health by making logo diet products containing a junk poison actually extracted from virtual raw sewage (genetically engineered E. coli bacteria are used to produce aspartame) part of their daily life.

The NZ Woman's Weekly, which might be considered supportive of Kiwi women, even thought a story about aspartame hazards directed at women, who are the largest group consuming aspartame products, was somehow inappropriate given that their pages are usually devoted to much more serious issues like Paris Hilton's stint in jail.

One shouldn't expect the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) to take much interest in the issue. They refused to let Betty Martini speak (July 19) to their oddly-named Consumer Forum, which is stacked with people happy to act as a rubber stamp for Authority policy – policy which could be summed up under the rubric "Anything good for industry is good enough for the NZFSA." Acting CEO Sandra Daly has herself confessed to using aspartame-containing products in firm belief in their virtue and the NZFSA vigorously defend the sweetener, convinced by all the shonky science from food industry junk experts" and an American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) loaded down with ex-chemistry industry flakes that aspartame is the best thing since sliced bread. Regulatory authorities worldwide – even at the level of United Nations and European Union involvement – are hardly any better and seem to have a revolving door relationship with the chemical and food industries. Who else, after all, is going to give chemists and toxicologists the sort of salaries their university educations lead them to expect? "Food is just chemicals" and "People are just chemicals" is the popular mythology inherent in a science and medical education these days, so why doubt aspartame, which, when all is said and done, never kills you straight away and is "just another chemical?"

Since I first became aware of problems being caused by aspartame back in 1990, I've been taken aback by the relaxed attitude of the science and medical community towards the whole chemical food additive and pesticide chemical residue issue as it relates to the human food chain. More alarming still is the manner in which ordinary people can put up with huge physical and mental damage from addiction to aspartame products like Diet Coke without ever questioning the most obvious item(s) in their diet that could be causing the problem.

When I finally got to cross-examine Abby Cormack I was astounded to discover that Wrigley's "No Sugar" gums were only the tip of the iceberg. She'd been consuming aspartame products for a total of nine years and Wrigley's gum was just the last straw to break the camel's back and cause her total collapse into massive depression, muscular dysfunction, skin problems and other chronic symptoms that half a dozen medical specialists and numerous hospital visits could provide no answer to. Simply stopping her daily use of Wrigley's gum produced an immediate initial cure. Now that she has been more than forty days free of ALL aspartame products practically all her medical symptoms have disappeared and Abby has become a leading New Zealand participant in a campaign by the Soil & Health Association, the Safe Food Campaign and the ADHD Association for a total ban on aspartame.

The whole aspartame issue becomes, in fact, a clear indication of the huge blind-spot we all

collectively have towards the things we do every day and somehow it exposes a defect in our nature that even rats and other lower order species don't appear to suffer from.

For unlike us, laboratory rats avoid aspartame wherever possible. In fact when US corporate additive producer G. D. Searle (later Monsanto/Nutrasweet) and Food & Drug Administration (FDA) food additive regulators tried to force-feed the stuff to rats as part of the Mickey Mouse pseudo-science used to validate such additions to our diet worldwide, the rats - being much cleverer than us - carefully isolated the chemical grains of aspartame from the food it was mixed with and left the puzzled "scientists" and "experts" with neat little piles of the poison in the corner of their cages. Rats apparently don't need experts to tell them what is safe. They rely on commonsense.

We are the laboratory rats!

Without a question of doubt, we are the real rats in the laboratory for a large number of food additive poisons in the food chain, but we are unlikely to be exposed to anything much more virulent and disabling than the scientifically established neurotoxin aspartame, (2) officially known as Additive E951 or 951 and technically defined as L-Aspartyl-L-phenylalanine methyl ester, 98%, aspartame CAS #22839-47-0, C₁₄H₁₈N₂O₅, which is now present as a sweetener in literally thousands of supermarket food and beverage products, as well as medicines and popular supplements. Patrol the shelves of your local supermarket, health shop and pharmacy and see for yourself. Look at the ingredient lists of your favourite foods and beverages and establish your own personal damage control.

Don't expect much sympathy for your sudden interest in what goes into your food, least of all from our doctors, health authorities and politicians. The only doctor in the whole of Oceania to stick her head over the parapets and condemn aspartame in public is Australian Sandra Cabot, in her Liver Diet book series. And while Sue Dengate's Australian food allergy activist group, the Food Intolerance Network (Website: www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info) covers a huge range of food additives and the problems they cause, aspartame only gets a mention among the huge list of other problem-causing chemical additives Sue has to deal with. Jenny Scott of the Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Association in Auckland and our long-standing health and organics campaign association, Soil & Health (publishers of "Organic NZ") are similarly stretched. Voluntary organisations simply lack the essential resources to carry out a job we actually employ the NZ Food Safety Authority and Food Standards Australia New Zealand to carry out using our tax dollars.

In a society with citizens more concerned and knowledgeable about food safety, NZFSA and FSANZ wouldn't last longer than the time it took to close down both offices and turn their collective staffs out onto the street. But we all currently seem to accept a vague social mythology that says both organisations are doing their job. Truth is, they are not. They rely solely on suspect data from the food industry and from official regulatory bodies like the FDA and European Union and United Nations food safety quangoes, who defer to experts reliant on industry for employment and funding.

The simple fact is, paid employment defending the public's interest in genuine, ethical food safety does not exist outside the odd Green-type political party as in Europe or New Zealand, where isolated politicians like our own Sue Kedgley are prepared to devote a large slice of their life to coming up to speed with the essential scientific and political background knowledge essential to understanding the nature of a chemical additive like aspartame.

The media, watchful for their industry advertisers, completely ignore the toxin and treat yours truly and the handful of food safety consumer activists like Jenny Scott, Meriel Watts, Alison White, Patricia Holborow and Sue Kedgley (the whole food safety issue is women-led), as obsessives with too much free time on our hands. It's only the small band of phenylketonurics among us who pay attention to the only toxicity warning appearing on aspartame products - "PHENYLKETONURICS: Contains phenylalanine" or simply the term "phenylalanine", which means nothing to the rest of us. Phenylketonurics suffer from an inherited genetic disease

known as phenylketonuria (PKU), a severe allergy to phenylalanine. They must be particularly careful about what they eat and normally follow a carefully tailored diet which excludes high protein foods. Their motivation comes from the fact that they can suffer permanent brain damage if exposed to the raw synthetic phenylalanine which comes as part of the complex aspartame molecule. For the rest of us it's "just another additive" and "the Government wouldn't allow that sort of thing if it was bad for us."

Well, Governments regularly do some pretty stupid things, and remaining wilfully ignorant about something you may be consuming every day which has a long history of fraud, shonky science, corrupt politics and health hazard is certainly not bliss – aspartame can kill and "death" is one of the outcomes underlined in court documents filed as part of major class action litigation against the aspartame-using food industry currently in progress in the USA. (3) About this course of events, however, the Australasian media has so far been completely silent. It's a can of worms no one wants to open in this country where aspartame is in thousands of products and approved by Government edict.

The silence is also very much a phenomenon of our south Pacific isolation. Particularly since release of recent Italian data (4) on aspartame's firm connection with cancer there has been growing involvement of Northern Hemisphere media in discussing the issue. In fact ever since Professor Olney pointed to an increase in brain cancers in November 1996, drawing attention to a rising curve in brain tumours in the USA starting within a year of the introduction of aspartame/additive 951 in 1981, there has been growing concern in the science community over the continued presence of aspartame in popular diet beverages like Diet Coke and in Wrigley's chewing gum and a host of Weightwatchers, fitness, health and diet products (read food and beverage labels for 951, "artificial sweetener" and/or "Phenylalanine" warnings).

This concern reached critical mass recently with the publication in peer-reviewed medical journals of two intensive studies by the Italian Ramazzini Foundation, in 2005 and 2007 (4), that demonstrated a clear connection between aspartame consumption and a variety of cancers including brain tumours – something that the very first research on aspartame in the 1970s indicated before aspartame approval became a political issue pushed through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) by the Ronald Reagan White House administration in payment for election campaign funding and support from the chemical industry (G.D.Searle and Monsanto in particular).

Of course in the normal, commonsense world where we, the ordinary public live, we should be able to say "Well, if there's a problem over aspartame's level of toxicity and other issues of potential hazard, we don't want it in the food chain!" This is the sensible response. What nearly everyone in New Zealand – and certainly in NZFSA's ironically-named Consumer Forum – doesn't know, however, is how heavily politicised the whole issue of the original approval process for aspartame was under FDA governance by that intellectual giant, US President Ronnie Reagan.

The politics behind aspartame's approval

Of course the main reason aspartame is approved in New Zealand is because aspartame is approved in the United States. Aspartame is a heavily politicised issue because it is a major American corporate profit base worth billions of dollars and, as every New Zealand adult should know by now, we usually bend over backwards to please Uncle Sam. We may pretend to be anti-nuclear, but even George Bush knows that's a snow job kept in circulation to fox the natives. The USA maintains a major US National Security Agency spy base down at Black Birch Stream near Blenheim and US Central Intelligence Agency planes involved in "renditioning" suspected "terrorists" to torture chambers in North Africa and Afghanistan have been spotted flying in and out of the US Deep Freeze programme's Harewood, Christchurch air base. Sucking up to the USA is good politics. Monsanto and the corporate chemical industry have helped put every American president in power since the 2nd World War and good relations with the USA means keeping American corporates happy and ensuring their products pass through our regulatory process virtually automatically providing they have the FDA stamp of

approval. In that respect NZFSA's present acting CEO, Sandra Daly is kept completely in the dark. She's in business to do what she's told. FSANZ is in the same position. The immediate former US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, is a central player in the aspartame approval drama, funnily enough, and the full story of what happened is like an episode out of "The Sopranos", but I'll try to keep it brief.

The scene opens on January 10, 1977. FDA Chief legal Counsel Richard Merrill has been considering the huge list of violations of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, committed by G. D. Searle under the administration of former Ford White House Chief of Staff, Donald Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld has been trying to get his pet project, the super-sweet chemical aspartame, through the FDA's approval process for a new food product. Approval of the product is worth billions of dollars to Searle and a huge bonus for Rumsfeld. The problem is, the FDA's scientific team consider the sweetener is a dangerous poison with the potential to kill. Not only this, but they have amassed a pile of evidence that Searle, with Rumsfeld's obvious approval, have gone through vital laboratory test reports on aspartame safety, eliminating evidence that the product maimed, disabled and killed test animals.

All the evidence for Searle malpractice has been assembled by the FDA's Jerome Bressler into an important document – now known as the Bressler Report - that anyone can read (it's on the official Federal record and available on www.dorway.com). As a consequence, a Richard Merrill writes a 33- page letter, recommending to U.S. Attorney Sam Skinner that a grand jury investigate Searle for "apparent violations of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C.331(e), Act 18 USC 1001," for "their willful and knowing failure to make reports to the Food and Drug Administration required by the Act 21, U.S.C. 355 (i) and for concealing material facts and making false statements in reports of animal studies conducted to establish the safety of (aspartame)." The legal machinery creaks into action, but the whole process is hampered by the fact that the corporate chemical industry pretty effectively controls Washington.

In the meantime it's suddenly January 21, 1981, the day after Ronald Reagan, a former B-grade Hollywood actor takes office as U.S. President. He's sailed into the White House on a huge raft of election funding from corporate America and G. D. Searle in particular and the word is out that he will not forget his friends. Donald Rumsfeld is still G.D. Searle's president and a firm Reagan favourite. Rumsfeld has been greasing Republican palms all round Washington for the past few years and telling the Searle sales force "he would call in all his markers and that no matter what, he would see to it that aspartame would be approved that year." (5)

That same day G.D.Searle reapply to the FDA for the approval of aspartame despite the fact that up-to-date this approval has been denied pending the prosecution of the company. No problem. Reagan and Rumsfeld already have a staunch Republican hack ready for the job as new FDA Commissioner - Arthur Hayes, who in short order overrules the FDA's own board of inquiry who have refused to approve aspartame and gives the product the FDA's stamp of approval.

It's well-known in Washington circles, however, that aspartame is not just any old political FDA approval, but is, in fact, a general signal to corporate America that Reagan means business and Big Business at that. The signal in particular, tells Big Business that from now on all the brakes are off, tricky regulations about silly things like public health and safety are gone for good and "Let's get together and make money, boys!"

Arthur Hayes is quickly bored by his job at the FDA, at any rate, and before too long goes off to work for notorious PR flack firm Burson-Marsteller, who just coincidentally, you understand, happen to be retained by G.D. Searle! At about the same time, Federal attorney Sam Skinner – remember, he's the one who's been assigned to prosecute Searle for fraudulent tests in their original aspartame application? - gets "an offer he can't refuse" from – Guess who! - Searle's lawyers! - and goes off to work for them for a reputed \$US1,000 per day, effectively sabotaging the whole Federal case and, of course, effectively ending any litigation threat against Searle for its deliberately falsified aspartame data.

The whole debauched exercise is the start of a long-standing criticism of US federal authorities – and the FDA in particular – that they have a "revolving door" relationship with G.D. Searle, Monsanto and the chemical industry in general. And, of course, as far as NZFSA and FSANZ is concerned this whole shoddy exercise just never happened. But it did, and its recorded in US Senate records. (5)

FSANZ denies toxicity

Aspartame, as we have seen, is fully approved as part of our food chain by the combined regulatory agency, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and our own NZFSA. FSANZ was formerly known under the rubric of ANZFA (Australia New Zealand Food Authority), but changed its name, according to popular Internet myth, because when you do a spell-check the suggested correction for ANZFA is always "unsafe"!

"Unsafe" is certainly the least of the criticisms one might make about Additive 951/aspartame. The synthetic sweetener rapidly breaks down in the human body into three chemicals hazardous to human health: - (1.) Aspartic acid, (around 40%); (2.) Phenylalanine, (around 50%); and (3.) Methanol (10%).

This breakdown process takes place spontaneously at a temperature of 30 degrees Celsius and happens immediately a diet product enters the human body (we operate normally at a temperature of 37 degrees). Hence a can of Diet Coke exposed in those bins outside a service station on a hot day – a common sight anywhere in New Zealand and Australia – will already be laced with a cocktail of dangerous toxins as will any diabetic bakery and Weight Watchers product containing aspartame which has been heated in its processing. Any analytic laboratory can prove this point for you for a cost of less than \$100.

The science behind methanol or "wood alcohol" toxicity is beyond debate. It's something you learn about early in a chemistry training because it's in every laboratory and is similar in some of its effects to ethanol, the ordinary drinking alcohol in all booze of whatever description. Easy access to methanol is a standing temptation at medical school and chemistry class parties, but it can blind you. Too much ethanol will normally only cause vomiting and loss of consciousness. Methanol is another story – it's quickly absorbed through the stomach and small intestine mucosa and converted into formaldehyde, a severe poison and carcinogen. Then, via a process called aldehyde hydrogenase, it is converted to formic acid. These two metabolites of methanol are toxic and cumulative. They can make you go blind and they can quickly kill you – which they do, often.

Anyone who consumes a litre or more of Diet Coke or some other aspartame- containing beverage per day is probably already near the limit for chronic methanol poisoning (6) and will be suffering muscle pain, headaches, migraines, sleep problems, dizziness and/or seizures, amongst other health problems. This is because aspartame breaks down extremely rapidly in a liquid form. The well-known Hollywood actor, Michael J. Fox, and several of his fellow participants in the TV drama "Spin City", sponsored by Diet Pepsi, have all been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. All received free supplies of the sponsoring diet product. Parkinson's is a well-diagnosed outcome from excess aspartame consumption, as is Alzheimer's. Fox denies a connection to his Pepsi consumption, but aspartame and Parkinson's – and Pepsi sales - flourish on such denials.

At the present time, in North America, there have been a rash of court cases and coroners' court hearings over sudden deaths from acute methanol poisoning, which we, with our knowledge here, can connect to the chronic aspartame product consumption of the victims. Similar cases are probably occurring all over New Zealand and Australia, but may easily be attributed to other causes such as a heart attack unless a careful autopsy is carried out and a history of aspartame use discovered.

As this story was going to press (late August 2007) the ad hoc group of activists publicising

Betty Martini's anti-aspartame speaking tour of New Zealand main centres were collating records on the dozens of New Zealanders who have been contacting us over the severe medical problems they have been suffering due to addictive consumption levels of aspartame products like Diet Coke and Wrigley's gum. In every case they were completely let down by our conservative medical profession, who appear to be almost completely oblivious to the medical conditions caused by aspartame and listed earlier.

It's the same story – and even worse – in the home of aspartame.

Chuck Fleming's wife, Diane, is currently serving a 50 year sentence down in Virginia, USA, for supposedly killing him with a methanol overdose. Chuck was a fitness fanatic, body builder and basketball player who drank litres of aspartame-containing diet drinks every day as part of his fitness routine and suddenly dropped dead – hardly surprising under the circumstances. The autopsy showed chronic methanol poisoning, enlarged heart, fatty liver, pulmonary oedema, etc - all symptoms of aspartame abuse. Police indicted Diane for poisoning her husband even though she helped them try and find out why he died and passed a lie detector test with flying colours.

Says methanol expert Dr Woodrow Monte (presently in retirement in bucolic Golden Bay, at the northwestern end of New Zealand's South Island) "When diet sodas and soft drinks, sweetened with aspartame, are used to replace fluid loss during exercise and physical exertion in hot climates, the intake of methanol can exceed 250 mg/day or 32 times the US Environmental Protection Agency's recommended limit of consumption for this cumulative poison." (6)

Dr. James Bowen, an authority on aspartame toxicity, explains that the heart muscle is very sensitive to methanol alcohol poisoning and any stress on the muscle from such a source often results in sudden death. He says: "The aspartame molecule is an alcohol poison about 20,000 times as toxic a poison as ethanol (regular old sipping, or beverage alcohol) on a per weight basis." (7)

NZFSA and FSANZ, secure in their ivory towers down in Wellington, simply say "this can't happen."

Methanol's hazard is exacerbated by the presence of the two amino-acids Aspartic acid (aspartate) and phenylalanine, in the break-down of aspartame in the human body. These two synthetic toxins (in their aspartame form) have a multiplying or synergistic role in methanol chemistry inside our bodies, a role which is still being studied and discussed in the scientific literature. But again, their independent role as toxins is not subject of debate unless you are an "expert" under contract to the aspartame-using food industry or, perhaps, a food safety regulator working for FSANZ or the FDA.

Phenylalanine in its synthetic form causes the most pernicious problems among aspartame addicts (Yes! It's highly addictive!). The amino-acid lowers the epilepsy seizure threshold in the human brain and depletes serotonin, triggering manic depression, suicidal tendencies, panic attacks, anxiety, insomnia, mood swings, paranoia, hallucinations and irrational rage. Airline pilots have a standard direction within their own inner circles and publications advising them to stay well clear of all diet products containing aspartame, following some alarming aspartame-induced lapses of control and judgement at the controls of passenger jet aircraft which have resulted in pilot- deregistration. (8)

Regarding the serious issue of who is in control of your airline flight to Sydney, the pilot or Diet Coke, Dr Russell Blaylock warns "Some of the more common complaints (from pilots using aspartame products – ED) include, disorientation, difficulty thinking and concentrating, visual blurring or even monocular blindness, seizures and heart failure. It is well known that the ingredients in aspartame, as well as its breakdown products, have deleterious effects on the nervous system and retina. For example, phenylalanine is a precursor of the catecholamine neurotransmitters in the brain and elevated levels in the brain have been associated with seizures. It should also be pointed out that these catecholamines are

metabolized to form other excitotoxins and peroxide products that can lead to elevated free radical formation and lipid peroxidation within the neurons. Likewise, aspartic acid (an excitotoxin) acts as an excitatory neurotransmitter and can lower the seizure threshold making a seizure more likely. The additive effect of aspartic acid and phenylalanine would significantly increase the likelihood of a seizure, especially under hypoglycemic conditions. This would occur if a diet drink is substituted for a meal, or if one is on a stringent diet." (9)

NZFSA & FSANZ misunderstand science

The confusion our regulators suffer over aspartame's potential hazard lies in a very common area of ignorance suffered particularly by toxicologists, dieticians and, in fact, anyone with an elementary background in university-level chemistry – the sort of people who, in other words, end up as "experts" in our national and state regulatory system. Both aspartic acid/aspartate and phenylalanine are common amino-acids found in Nature in foods as well as in the human body. They are protein building blocks and wherever they occur in Nature and in our diet they are always combined and accompanied by a huge array of associated bio-chemicals and substances with which our digestive system and physiology is entirely familiar.

They NEVER appear as independent ISOLATED amino-acids as they do in their aspartame break-down form, and in a healthy human body their complex action in the functioning of our brains and nervous systems is carefully monitored by a huge cellular system of biological checks and balances. This system is quite unable to deal with the flood of free aspartic acid, phenylalanine and methanol resulting from aspartame consumption. The human body, being the glorious mechanism that it is, will try to compensate, but under the steady assault from a poison like Diet Coke, will eventually weaken and sicken with any combination of over a thousand symptoms.

Dr H.J. Roberts, author of a leading text on the medical damage caused by aspartame, *Aspartame Disease: An Ignored Epidemic*, has become an acknowledged world expert on aspartame poisoning, its diagnosis and treatment at his Florida clinic. He now lists over 1,400 medical symptoms and disorders triggered by aspartame, collated from the thousands of patients who pass through his clinic's doors. His book itself is based on the detailed case histories of 1,200 patients whose symptoms of disease disappeared when aspartame was removed from their diet. He estimates: "Hundreds of thousands of consumers, more likely millions, currently suffer major reactions to products containing aspartame. Today, every physician probably encounters aspartame disease in everyday practice, especially among patients with illnesses that are undiagnosed or difficult to treat." (10)

Consumption – and particularly HEAVY consumption – of aspartame-containing food and beverage products, is the equivalent in logic of tipping a can of petrol over your car's efficiently working engine and setting the whole engine compartment on fire! Of course, petrol drives a car's engine, but it must be in the right place under the correct controls. In flames, the car may continue to run for a little while longer, but the fire will eventually consume it and put it off the road for good.

What our bodies are not familiar with and what our bodies cannot cope with and remain healthy are the three artificially-created chemicals that result from the immediate break-down of aspartame as it passes the 30 degrees C threshold – aspartic acid, phenylalanine and methanol. But none of this fazes our health regulators.

FSANZ and NZFSA say methanol appears in many items of normal diet, like fruit, without causing damage. They neglect to add that this methanol content is minute and buffered by the valuable nutrients in natural foods. Furthermore, natural items of diet with a methanol content invariably contain ethanol, which is itself a natural buffer against methanol poisoning. (6) Aspartame products contain no such buffer. Ethanol is not present in aspartame. Our regulators appear ignorant of this elementary fact.

FSANZ and NZFSA deny that aspartame toxins can pass over the blood/brain barrier – a

crucial point in understanding how aspartame toxins circulating in the blood can cross into brain cells and interfere in brain chemistry. Their assertion is based on seriously out-of-date aspartame "science" held in their standard database and used to answer public queries. The problem is that this "science" is based on shonky data proven some years ago to be the work of paid science hacks working for the aspartame industry. (11.) However, the very fact that all aspartame products must – in theory – carry the "PHENYLKETONURICS: Contains phenylalanine" warning gives the lie to this claim from our regulators. The synthetic phenylalanine overdose contained in aspartame easily crosses the blood/brain barrier just as the ordinary ethanol alcohol in our booze does and just as the toxins in all the other recreational drugs we consume, like "P", Ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, etc, do. Our drugs of choice, in fact, would lose their popularity straight away if this mystical "blood/brain barrier" wasn't so easily breached in the first place.

Under detailed cross-examination NZFSA and FSANZ representatives invariably fudge these issues and display denial symptoms and ignorance of the most basic facts about this toxin.

And it's not just our own poorly-educated regulators and the American FDA who approve the product.

Tens of thousands of tonnes of aspartame are poured into the world food chain with the full approval of the World Health Organisation, European Union, and in fact every regulatory agency from here to China - the country which is presently competing with the USA to become the top supplier of aspartame on the planet. It seems we all can't get enough of aspartame.

Aspartame, of course, is highly addictive, just like our other legal drugs, nicotine and ethanol/alcohol and like the maze of illegal substances kept in circulation. What better way of ensuring huge annual profits to the food and additive chemical industries than by inserting a guaranteed, legally permitted and "scientifically approved" additive like aspartame into our supermarket food chain?

But it doesn't get the rat vote! And with that curious intelligence displayed by "lower" species everywhere, cockroaches won't eat it, cats and dogs won't eat it, ants won't eat it and flies won't eat it - but politicians, food regulators and medical professionals worldwide consider it safe enough for us, and dutifully out here in God's Own Country many of us are consuming it in such large quantities that Diet Coke and "Sugarless" Wrigley's gum are among top-selling supermarket items and the food industry is laughing all the way to the bank..

Why is the NZSIS interested in Betty Martini?

One thing every New Zealander learns by the age of ten is that everyone of us four million or so knows everyone else – sooner or later. The long arm of coincidence or Jungian synchronicity obviously aids in this process, which brought Abby Cormack, dedicated Wrigley's gum addict and Dorothy Charles, wife of an NZ Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) agent, together in – of all places – Susie Clemens' Auckland Pilates studio at 1 Barrys Point Road in Takapuna. Certainly neither expected to see the other and, as we all know, a spook – which Dorothy's husband most certainly is - can never retire.

You see the Charles used to live down the road from the Cormacks in Wellington's up-market Khandallah suburb and everyone knew they were associated with Security Intelligence as gossipy Kiwis always do.

And, you see, Dorothy is not one of Susie's Pilates students and the meeting was only being held for Susie's teacher and students so they could pass on the dangers of aspartame to their friends. Dorothy, a greying woman in her 60s, sitting there carefully taking notes, was very much the odd person out in an audience that included no one (apart from Betty Martini, myself and notorious health activist and NZ's last remaining true Communist, 86-year-old Margaret Jones) over the age of 35.

So what was Dorothy Charles taking notes for? Betty Martini's statements condemning aspartame are all over the Internet like a chronic rash among the nearly three million hits you get on the word "aspartame." What is more, we aspartame subverters were saturating the news media with information about Betty's views and activities around New Zealand. We had not, however, told anyone about Betty's meeting with Susie Clemens' Pilates people. To get that information you'd either have to be moving in youthful Auckland Pilates circles, tapping someone's phone conversations or, perhaps, doing a key word search through private emails via the USA's National Security Agency's Echelon eavesdropping electronic surveillance station down at Black Birch Stream out among Marlborough's vineyards. Black Birch taps into all our free nation's Internet traffic and phone calls searching for evidence of treasonous activity among us all.

You can't be too careful down here among the icebergs of the South Pole. Like those posters they put up during the 2nd World War, "Osama bin Laden is listening" for whispers that could lead to New Zealand becoming an Islamic state. Of course it's hard to see how Betty Martini fits into this scenario. She was still trembling at the thought that she'd been in contact with a real, flesh and blood Communist (Marg Jones) when I kissed her goodbye. Betty is a devout Jehovah's Witness from the Deep South state of Georgia in the US of A and had only just discovered the truth behind the widespread American belief that a bridge links New Zealand to Australia. How she ever got on the SIS radar as an object of surveillance by the matronly Dot is difficult to comprehend unless you recognise that Coca Cola and Wrigley's are actually virtual arms of the White House and George Bush's administration as well as nett contributors to his presidential campaigns.

So of course Betty has to be stopped!

Opposing aspartame when it has been approved by Donald Rumsfeld is like peeing on the Statue of Liberty and the American Constitution. It's like joining Al Qaeda and spitting in George Bush's eye! Little Betty with her rather seductive Deep South drawl and flowing Hollywood Betty Grable tresses must be stopped!

They stopped her at London's Gatwick airport two years ago and held her in close confinement for half a day while they tried to extort a confession from her of criminal or subversive intent. They "lost" her bags on her arrival in Auckland and our SIS spooks left all their usual calling signs (dropped sandwich crumbs, forced locks and a plastic glove!) when her bags were finally "found."

So what signs of subversion was Dorothy Charles able to detect for her husband's report back to "M" at spook headquarters down in Wellington?

Well, little Abby, bless her heart, was able to overlook Dorothy's note taking and reports that Dot went into overload when Betty was asked a key question from her Pilates audience: "Why is aspartame not banned?"

"Profit, addiction and greed" was Betty's reply, which will now be recorded against Betty's name on her ever-growing file held at FBI and CIA headquarters.

Of course Dorothy, wife of a registered, card-carrying SIS agent "retired" in Auckland could just be a deeply concerned citizen gathering data to prevent the rampant paranoia Diet Coke consumption could induce in fat-conscious security agents forced by their occupation to spend hours lurking on street corners or sitting at boring public meetings taking notes.

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1. Russell L. Blaylock, M.D., "Excitotoxins; The Taste That Kills", Health Press, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504, 1994.

2. John W. Olney and others, "Increasing Brain Tumor Rates: Is There a Link to Aspartame?" Journal Of Neuropathology And Experimental Neurology Vol. 55, No. 11 (November 1996), pgs. 1115-1123. James Bowen, M.D. "Aspartame Murders Infants in violation of Title

18, Chapter 50A, Sec 1091-3 of the Domestic Genocide Code" see <www.dorway.com . Also Dr. H.J. Roberts, "Does Aspartame Cause Human Brain Cancer?" Journal Of Advancement In Medicine Vol. 4, No. 4 (Winter 1991), pgs. 231-241, and his book, Aspartame Disease: An Ignored Epidemic, Sunshine Sentinel Press, Florida, USA, 2001, Website: <www.sunsentpress.com

3. The suits were filed in Shasta, Sonoma and Butte County, California early in 2004. They allege that the food companies committed fraud and breach of warranty by marketing products to the public such as diet Coke, diet Pepsi, sugar free gum, Flintstone's vitamins, yoghurt and children's aspirin with the full knowledge that aspartame, the sweetener in them, is neurotoxic.. Defendants in the lawsuits include Coca-cola, PepsiCo, Bayer Corp., the Dannon Company, William Wrigley Jr. Company, Walmart, ConAgra Foods, Wyeth, Inc., The NutraSweet Company, and Altria Corp. (parent company of Kraft Foods and Philip Morris).

4. Morando Soffritti, Fiorella Belpoggi, Davide Degli Esposti, Luca Lambertini, Eva Tibaldi, and Anna Rigano, Cesare Maltoni Cancer Research Center, European Ramazzini Foundation of Oncology and Environmental Sciences, Bologna, Italy, "First Experimental Demonstration of the Multipotential Carcinogenic Effects of Aspartame Administered in the Feed to Sprague-Dawley Rats," Environmental Health Perspectives, Volume 114, Number 3, March 2006; Morando Soffritti, Fiorella Belpoggi, Eva Tibaldi, Davide Degli Esposti, Michela Lauriola, "Lifespan Exposure to Low Doses of Aspartame Beginning During Prenatal Life Increases Cancer Effects in Rats," Environmental Health Perspectives, online issue 13 June 2007 (available as doi:10.1289/ehp.10271 at <<http://dx.doi.org/>.

5. Gordon, Gregory, 1987. "NutraSweet: Questions Swirl," UPI Investigative Report, 10/12/87. Reprinted in US Senate report (1987, page 483-510).

6. Dr. Woodrow C. Monte, "Aspartame: Methanol and the Public Health," Journal of Applied Nutrition, Volume 36, 1984, No. 1, page 42-54.

7 See Dr James Bowen on <www.dorway.com aspartame website.

8. "Aspartame – Not for the Dieting Pilot?" Aviation Safety Digest, Spring 1989; Hicks, M., "Nutrasweet ... too good to be true?" General Aviation News, July 1989; "High on High", Plane & Pilot, January 1990.

9. ASPARTAME AND PILOTS - Position paper by Russell Blaylock, M.D., neurosurgeon on <www.dorway.com in section "Aviation Dr. Blaylock's position paper on aspartame and pilots." Also see <<http://www.russellblaylockmd.com>.

10. Pat Thomas, "Aspartame – The Shocking Story of the World's Bestselling Sweetener," The Ecologist, Vol. 35, No.7, September 2005, pages 35 – 46.

11. Nisperos-Carriedo, Myrna O., Philip E. Shaw, 1990. "Comparison of Volatile Flavour Components in Fresh and Processed Orange Juices," Journal of Agriculture & Food Chemistry, Volume 38, page 1048-1052.

CHECK THESE RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For details of how to get aspartame out of your system check the Websites - <www.dorway.com, <www.wnho.net , and the Aspartame Toxicity Center, <www.holisticmed.com/aspartame. A new video exposing the aspartame industry is "Sweet Misery: A Poisoned World", available from Email: <cori@soundandfuryproductions.com , Tel (USA) - 520 - 624 -9710. Also see the medical text on aspartame: "Aspartame Disease: An Ignored Epidemic", available online from <www.sunsentpress.com or Tel (USA) 1 800 827 7991 H. J. Roberts, M.D. (along with other books and tapes). Dr Roberts' book contains a chapter on trial lawyers and drug interactions since aspartame is a severely neurotoxic drug

and class action litigation has already begun. See also books on aspartame by neurosurgeon Russell Blaylock, MD, "Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills", and "Health & Nutrition Secrets To Save Your Life." See websites above for details. The latter book tells aspartame victims what they have to avoid and why, and explains how a victim can re- build their immune system. Dr. Blaylock also has a book on Cancer Strategies. With aspartame having caused so many tumours in original studies this is a helpful resource.

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"God is not on the side of the heavy battalions,
but of the best shots." Voltaire, 1694-1778, The Piccini Notebooks.

Additives to Avoid

The following additives may cause health problems such as allergies, asthma, hyperactivity, birth defects and cancer.

- Ill effects are linked to many of these additives in human trials and animal tests.
- Additives are not required to be tested in real-life cocktails in which we eat them.
- Doses allowed do not take into account a child's greater intake for their body weight.
- Research on addictive aspartame and MSG associates them with potential brain damage and effects ranging from mild and transitory to debilitating or life-threatening.

Colours

102 tartrazine
104 quinoline yellow
110 sunset yellow
122 azorubine, carmoisine
123 amaranth
124 ponceau, brilliant scarlet
127 erythrosine
129 allura red
132 indigotine, indigo carmine
133 brilliant blue
142 green S, food green, acid brilliant green
151 brilliant black
155 brown, chocolate brown
160b annatto, bixin, norbixin
173 aluminium

Antioxidants

310-312 all gallates
319 TBHQ
320 butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA)
321 butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT)

Flavours

Approx 3000 permitted, untested and unregulated. Artificial and natural are both suspect. Some may contain MSG (621) or free glutamate.

'...flavouring' implies artificial, 'flavoured with ...' implies natural.

Flavour enhancers

620-625 glutamic acid and all glutamates, incl. 621 monosodium glutamate (MSG) which may be disguised as hydrolysed protein, yeast extract, sodium or calcium caseinate. *See www.truthinlabeling.com*
627 disodium guanylate
631 disodium inosinate
635 ribonucleotides

Preservatives

200-203 sorbic acid, potassium & calcium sorbates
210-213 benzoic acid, sodium, potassium & calcium benzoates
220-228 sulphur dioxide, all sulphites, bisulphites, metabisulphites
249-252 all nitrates & nitrites
280-283 propionic acid, sodium, potassium & calcium propionates

Artificial sweeteners

950 acesulphame potassium
951 aspartame
952 sodium or calcium cyclamate
954 saccharin
955 sucralose
961 neotame

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For more information also see: the book "The Chemical Maze" by Bill Statham, www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info <http://www.mbm.net.au/health/guide.htm>, www.mpwhi.com and www.holisticmed/aspartame on aspartame, www.nzfsa.govt.nz (for a list of permitted additives), additive info: www.greens.org.nz



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