

## **Proven Unsafe But FDA-Approved: Are YOU Still Consuming This Man- Made Poison?**

**Americans drink more soda than anyone else on the planet -- well over 700 eight-ounce servings each year, on average, and an increasing amount of it is diet soda.**

**They might be more reluctant to do so if they knew about the safety questions still surrounding aspartame. A number of scientists responding expressed major concerns about aspartame's safety at the time of its approval, and even more indicated areas where they believed more research is needed on aspartame to resolve their concerns -- research on areas such as neurological functions, brain tumors, seizures, headaches, and adverse effects on children and pregnant women.**

**Grist reports:**

***"In a 1996 survey, Ralph G. Walton ... looked at 166 peer-reviewed studies on aspartame undertaken between 1980 and 1985. He found that all 74 of the studies funded by the industry found***

***no adverse effects from aspartame, while 84 of the 92 independently funded articles did find bad effects."***

**Aspartame is the ingredient found in NutraSweet, It is also found in Equal, Spoonful, Equal Measure, AminoSweet, Benevia, NutraTaste, Canderel, and many popular "diet" sodas. This chemical is currently on the ingredient list of nearly 6,000 products worldwide. But since it was approved for use as a food additive in 1981, it has been dogged by complaints about its safety.**

**Was aspartame ever proven safe for human consumption before it gained FDA approval as a food additive?**

**Not according to Dr. John Olney, a researcher at Washington University in Saint Louis who first began studying aspartame in 1970. Dr. Olhney believes aspartame should not be on the market today "because it hasn't been demonstrated to be safe." Also in agreement with Dr. Olney are the FDA's own investigations into the chemical from 1975 to 1980.**

**When the FDA was presented with Dr. Olney's research, they assigned an outside public board**

**of inquiry the task of deciding if aspartame should be allowed for human consumption. In 1980, the doctors on that board unanimously ruled that aspartame should not go on the market. An internal FDA panel concluded the same thing in 1980.**

**According to the FDA Chairman at that time, Dr. Gere Goyan, his next recommendation was to set up another FDA committee to study aspartame, composed people who played no previous part in the former studies of aspartame. Dr. Gere Goyan never saw the results of that 1980 FDA internal study, because he was forced to step down as FDA Chairman the day Ronald Reagan took office on January 21, 1981.**

**His replacement? Dr. Arthur Hill Hayes.**

**Dr. Hayes is notable for two reasons. First, he had no previous history of dealing with the science of food additives. Second, he was apparently hand picked to head the FDA by a prominent member of Ronald Reagan's political transition team, Donald Rumsfeld. Yes, the same Donald Rumsfeld who led the United States into the multi trillion dollar wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as Secretary of**

**Defense during the Bush presidency. But in 1981, Rumsfeld had a different title: CEO of the G.D Searle company, the company that owned the patent on aspartame.**

**One of Dr. Arthur Hill Hayes first acts as FDA Chairman was granting aspartame approval for use in dry goods. Incidentally, one of Hayes' last acts in office as FDA Chairman was to approve aspartame for use in beverages.**

**So was aspartame approved because studies ever showed it was safe for human consumption? Or was it approved thanks to the political influence of Donald Rumsfeld?**

**According to former Senator Howard Metzenbaum, who reviewed the FDA's approval process of aspartame in the Senate in 1987, "I think there were a lot of politics involved in its being approved." Research scientist Dr. Olney is even more blunt, "the issue (aspartame) is really not an issue of science, it's an issue of politics."**