



THE ELEMENTS OF HEALING

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MSG DECEPTION

MSG, or monosodium glutamate is an addictive ingredient used in processed foods. This additive enhances the flavor of processed, canned, and frozen food and is used to cover up the taste of other additives such as preservatives. Even seasonings and sauce mixes used to prepare fresh vegetable and meat dishes are likely to contain MSG—sneaked into foods under many names. Side effects of MSG tend to be felt by those eating frequently in restaurants. This newsletter will cover ways of detecting MSG and the health problems created by eating MSG on a regular basis.

Prepared food products often contain MSG through hidden labeling, legally allowed. Learning how to detect this substance with negative health impacts is important for protecting yourself, as well as avoiding weight gain. On the upside, tasty alternatives for seasonings are featured in this issue. Phytonutrients (e.g. vitamins and minerals) in whole, fresh foods give the rich flavor our taste buds seek. This is the healthy alternative.

What is MSG?

The seasoning MSG is derived from glutamic acid, an essential amino acid or type of protein found in many foods, including fruits and vegetables. A fermentation process is used to produce MSG.

Sound natural enough? The problem with eating MSG is that this highly concentrated form of glutamic acid is processed by the body very differently than with fresh foods. The impact is a rapid increase of glutamate in the body, which over-stimulates brain cells and disrupts the endocrine system, making it difficult to maintain good health.



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*High-level wellness is
within your reach with
mindful self-care.*

Give your body a break!

Health Impacts

There exists a great debate over MSG, with manufacturers of MSG trying to debunk the many research studies. Side effects of MSG may include: weight gain, headaches, an increase in blood sugar, an increase in blood pressure, numbness/tingling in the limbs, asthma attacks and metabolic syndrome (increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, and stroke).

Consuming large amounts of MSG is linked to oxidative damage to cells, contributing to free radical formation. This process is tied to the development of chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

In relation to weight gain, studies indicate that MSG decreases satiety, leading to increased caloric intake later on in the day. Hence the addictive hoax—increased appetite, better taste—more processed foods loaded with MSG.

Keep in mind the sodium in MSG. More processed foods consumed lead to increased sodium intake—tending to contribute to high blood pressure.

Top Foods to Avoid

As a popular flavor enhancer, MSG is commonly found in:

Fast food	Instant noodles
Seasoning mixes	Salad dressings
Convenience meals	Crackers
Processed meats	Frozen meals
Soy sauce	Canned foods
Broth or bouillon	Potato chips
Imitation crab	Parmesan cheese
Popcorn	Gravy



Reading the labels is an essential habit. And shifting to a diet consisting of primarily fresh, whole foods is the best protection. Overlooking MSG can happen to anyone. I was recently shocked to learn that the organic bouillon I was using contained MSG under a hidden name.

Avoiding MSG takes a bit of detective work. MSG is found hiding in foods due to the processed food manufacturers' successes in mislabeling. In other words, governmental labeling standards have permitted the use of over 75 words related to MSG. The following are some of the common names indicating the potential presence of MSG.

- Monosodium Glutamate
- Yeast extract
- Autolyzed yeast
- Spices
- Gelatin
- Glutamic Acid
- Glutamate
- Hydrolyzed protein
- Hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP)
- Hydrolyzed plant protein (HPP)
- Enzymes
- Enzyme modified
- Ajinomoto
- Calcium caseinate
- Sodium caseinate
- Monopotassium Glutamate
- Calcium Glutamate
- Monoammonium Glutamate
- Magnesium Glutamate
- Natrium Glutamate
- Protease

Consumer Alert! processed food manufacturers are allowed to put "contains no MSG" on the label, even when other forms of glutamate are used.



Embrace the Alternatives

Adding flavor to fresh vegetables, meat and fruits is the healthy, easy alternative to manufactured food additives. Herbs and spices are not only delicious, but also contain healing properties as well—moving your body toward that state of optimal health.

Here's a time saving, delicious tip: mix ahead a blend of spices and keep on hand to season your vegetables, fish or meat dishes.



Herbs de Provence

This mix is great to season meats, especially chicken.

- 4 tablespoons dried rosemary
- 4 tablespoons dried savory
- 4 tablespoons dried thyme
- 4 tablespoons dried basil
- 4 tablespoons dried marjoram
- 4 tablespoons dried Italian parsley
- 2 tablespoons dried oregano

Mix herbs together and store in a tightly sealed container.

Moroccan Spice Mix

This mix is superb as a rub on meats or to toss with vegetables with oil before roasting. These spices contain major anti-inflammatory properties.

- 3 tablespoons ground ginger
- 3 tablespoons ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon allspice
- 2 teaspoons ground turmeric

Mix spices together and store in a tightly sealed container.

Spice blends can also be purchased, but remember that commercial blends may have MSG sneaked in as an ingredient.



A Word about Umami

In the 1980's umami was officially recognized as the fifth basic taste group. The other four are sweet, salty, bitter, and sour. Its flavor is associated with savory. This is the hallmark of broths and cooked meat. The flavor is tasted through receptors that are responsive to the amino acid glutamate, widely present in these and other foods. It is not considered desirable by itself but adds intricacy when complementing other tastes.

Umami Cuisine

The flavor of umami can be found in many easily obtained foods. Foods containing umami components may be found locally and include beef, seaweed, soy sauce, cheese, tomatoes, mushrooms, homemade broth, green tea, seafood, corn, green beans, potatoes, and garlic.

Foods that have been fermented like anchovy/fish sauce and miso are principally high in umami flavor, as fermentation breaks down the proteins into free amino acids, such as glutamic acid.



Enjoy an adventure on the path to good health! Eat well and be well!

This newsletter is co-authored by Dr. George Mandel and Susan Guyette, Ph.D., Integrative Nutrition Health Coach

Sources:

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ABOUT DR. GEORGE MANDEL

Dr. Mandel is a National Board-Certified Diplomate, certified by the National Council for the Certification of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, and is also a trained detoxification specialist, certified by the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association. George Mandel has practiced as a Reiki master since 1998. He has studied with the late Vera Hirano in Santa Fe, NM, and has worked extensively with clients suffering from anxiety, depression, and muscular and joint injuries. Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing and wellness, treating the mind/body/spirit. Benefits of Reiki include feelings of peace, security, and well-being.

Dr. Mandel is a trained practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and has studied at the International Acupuncture Training Center, located in Beijing, China. He is knowledgeable in a variety of healing modalities that together constitute Oriental Medicine. This includes acupuncture, Chinese and Japanese diagnostic techniques, pulse and tongue assessment, moxibustion, tuina (Chinese medical massage), herbal formulas, and Chinese nutritional therapy.

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ABOUT SUSAN GUYETTE

Susan Guyette, Ph.D., is of Métis heritage (Micmac Indian/Acadian French). She is an Integrative Nutrition Health Coach, has written the newspaper column "Everyday Green" for the *Green Fire Times* for the past ten years, has co-written the medical newsletter "The Elements of Healing (for nine years)," and has five published books. Additionally, she is an experienced trainer, conference speaker, and has 34 years of experience in community planning work—particularly with rural Hispanics and Native American tribes in New Mexico.

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