

Pure Facts

Newsletter of the Feingold® Associations of the United States



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MSG and the Feingold Program

Feingold members need not eliminate MSG, but many are cautious of this additive . . . and with good reason.

Unlike "the big five" additives eliminated on the Feingold Program (synthetic colors, synthetic flavos, BHA, BHT, and TBHQ), monosodium glutamate (MSG) is one of the program's "little five" food additives. These additives are not prohibited, but are suspected of causing problems for some of our members. They are: MSG, corn syrup/sweeteners, sodium benzoate, nitrates, and calcium propionate.

The furor over MSG began with a letter published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1968. It was written by a physician who found he experienced pain, weakness, numbing, and heart palpitations shortly after eating Chinese food. The condition was quickly dubbed "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome."

they believed could be attributed to this additive. And public pressure soon persuaded manufacturers of baby foods to remove the MSG.

Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) notes, "In 1970, a committee of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) with strong industry ties concluded that ordinary levels of MSG in food would be unlikely to cause problems in human infants. The committee argued that the so-called blood-brain barrier limits the passage of excess glutamate into the infant's brain. Nevertheless, because it could find no evidence "that the usage [of MSG] confers any benefit to the child," the com-

Helping Families



mittee recommended "that MSG not be added to foods specifically designed for infants." (*Nutrition Action Healthletter*, 9/87.)

While the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has never prohibited the use of MSG in baby food, they do recommend that it not be given to children until they are neurologically mature. Dianne Nixon, a Feingold volunteer, once contacted the FDA to ask them, "At what age can we consider that a child is neurologically mature?" The FDA said they didn't know.

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MSG and Infants

Following the publication of the letter, other physicians soon reported a wide variety of physical symptoms which

Tips from a Working Mother

By Lynn Murphy

Every mother is a working mother, whether you're employed outside the home or not.

"Work smarter, not harder" is something I've heard at my office. I've put it to use for the chore I dislike most — grocery shopping.

For this "work smarter" tip you need at least one 7-year-old. I make up my shopping list throughout the week in a special way. Whenever I think of something, I add it to the list in one of three columns: foods I select, things for my 9-year-old to pick out and those my 7-year-old can find.

I cut the list apart before we go to the store, and go over any questions the children may have about which brands are OK. (They have become very aware of brands.)

Coast to Coast

Dividing up the shopping list like this accomplishes many things. It keeps the kids from dragging on MY cart, gives them something to do, teaches them how to shop and choose Feingold-approved brands, and it saves us time at the supermarket.

The children become a part of the entire eating-properly process from the beginning. And, as a bonus, they have some practice with reading labels and weighing produce.

Time is a precious thing for the busy mother, but it's been worth the effort spent during the first few shopping trips. Now, we get out of the supermarket in about half the time.

— reprinted from FABA Facts

The Feingold® Associations of the United States, Inc., founded in 1976, are non-profit volunteer organizations whose purposes are to support their members in the implementation of the Feingold Program and to generate public awareness of the potential role of foods and synthetic additives in behavior, learning and health problems. The program is based on a diet eliminating synthetic colors, synthetic flavors, and the preservatives BHA, BHT, and TBHQ.

The Many Names of MSG

While most people understand MSG sensitivity, many are unaware that the popular product "Accent" is pure monosodium glutamate.

Since the industry considers MSG to be natural, and because the FDA has no regulations regarding the meaning of the word, many products labeled as "natural" contain MSG:

It can be listed as "flavor enhancer" or shown on ingredient labels as simply "flavoring."

Center for Science in the Public Interest urges consumers to demand that the FDA require manufacturers to tell consumers when monosodium glutamate is present in foods. Feingold members may use the form in this newsletter to contact the Food & Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture.

Nobody knows exactly how MSG works.

Items found in health food stores often contain MSG in the form of an additive known as "hydrolyzed vegetable protein" (HVP) or "hydrolyzed plant protein" (HPP). According to an industry publication, HVP contains between 9 and 16 percent MSG. (See *Pure Facts* for October 1986.)

Soups, gravies, and meatless dishes are particularly likely to contain MSG and/or HVP, but it can be found in foods as unlikely as chips and salad dressings.

Mayacamas French Onion Soup is a good example of the confusion caused by the lack of labeling regulations. The front of the package prominently states, "Naturally flavored, NO MSG." But a phone call to the company disclosed that the "natural flavors" listed on the back include HVP. The company spokesman said they were changing the label to reflect the actual ingredients.

What Is MSG?

According to the Glutamate Association of the United States, MSG is "the sodium salt of glutamic acid, an amino acid and one of the important components of protein."

"Glutamate is naturally present — in 'bound' form, linked to protein and in 'free' form — in virtually all foods, including meat, fish, poultry, milk (including human milk), and many vegetables.

Hyperactivity and Psychotic Symptoms From MSG

In 1978 the *New England Journal of Medicine* again published a letter from a physician who described a personal encounter with MSG.

Dr. Arthur D. Coleman of the University of California Medical Center said his wife and 9-year-old son had apparently experienced psychiatric disorders as a result of eating food containing MSG.

Coleman said his wife underwent a "two-week depressive syndrome" and that his son had been in psychotherapy for hyperactivity and other problems. Coleman said his son's symptoms disappeared after he was placed on a diet free of the food additive.

"My wife is a 38-year-old woman in good health with no previous history of psychiatric disorder," he wrote to the *Journal*. "She had the typical acute five-hour to 12-hour monosodium glutamate reaction (including face and neck tightness, pressure behind the eyes, flushing, burning sensations in the chest and abdominal discomfort) after meals in restaurants and at home that included monosodium glutamate as a food additive.

"In addition to the acute symptoms, she and her friends and family noted a longer-term psychological effect that

usually began [after] 48 hours in each acute attack and lasted for approximately two weeks. She became profoundly depressed with . . . doubt-ridden, gloomy fantasies and occasional unprecipitated outbursts of rage.

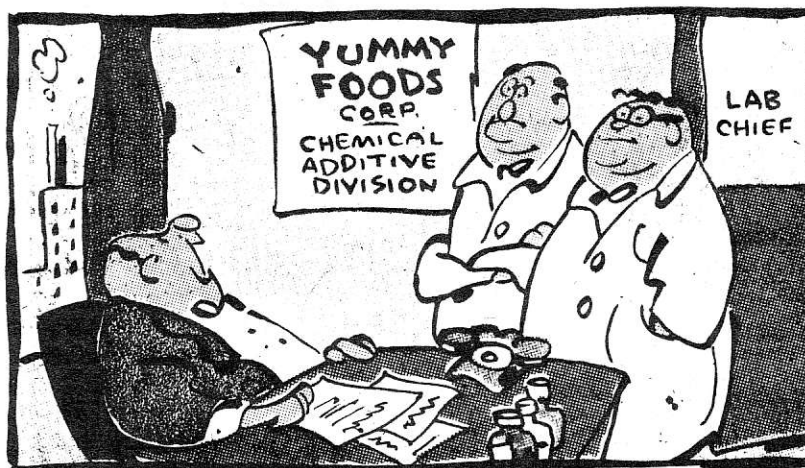
"Although there were no frank hallucinations, she did describe people as looking 'strange and ominous,' with corresponding feelings of paranoia in otherwise routine situations. When in these states, she appeared to me to have the signs and symptoms of a mild organic psychotic depressive reaction," Dr. Coleman wrote.

"Eventually monosodium glutamate toxicity was suspected. A test dose of won-ton soup precipitated the acute reaction as well as the two-week depressive syndrome.

"Except for two occasions, for the past year she has been on a diet free of monosodium glutamate, with complete relief from both the acute and chronic symptoms. On both occasions we ate restaurant food that we later learned contained soup stock laced with monosodium glutamate. Both times she again displayed the typical acute and chronic symptoms that had be-deviled her in the past," Coleman wrote.

GRIN & BEAR IT

*GRIN AND BEAR IT by Fred Wagner
by permission of News America Syndicate*



"We want the product to be attractive, nutritious, and tasty . . . even if you have to add food to it!"

'Bound' and 'Free'

The difference between MSG in "bound" or "free" form is the crucial difference, according to food additive expert Beatrice Trum Hunter.

In addressing the Feingold Association at its 11th annual Conference, Ms. Hunter explained, "It's true that glutamic acid is found in many foods, but when it's in food, it's always in a bound

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FAUS Conference to Be Held in San Francisco Area

Plan your summer vacation around the Feingold Association's Annual Conference in the lovely Santa Cruz Mountains in California (just minutes from the San Jose International Airport).

"Helping Families Coast to Coast" is the theme of this year's conference, to run from **Wednesday evening, June 22nd through Sunday morning, June 26th**. All Feingold members are welcome.

The Friday excursion will be a bus tour of the coastal area, with shopping along the wharf and a beach barbecue afterward. For guests whose full payment of \$240 is received by May 15, the excursion will be free.

As always, the food will be Feingold safe, and predominantly Stage I. Speakers, workshops, and the opportunity to meet other Feingold members are always the highlights of these conferences.

Contact the Feingold Association of the Bay Area for details on the Conference, and for information on family accommodations, sightseeing opportunities, and nearby campgrounds. Use the form on the reverse side, or phone either (408) 353-1051 or (408) 629-8062.

EPA's Decision Called 'Scientific Vandalism'

The problem of PCBs and DDT were discovered as a result of information collected by the National Human Adipose Tissue Survey (NHATS). Since 1967 the NHATS has measured the amount of chemicals stored in body fat.

With over 60,000 chemicals now in common use, this survey has provided a warning system for regulators and the medical community.

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) announcement that it was dropping the survey in order to save money has brought sharp protests from scientists.

As a result, the Foundation for Advancements in Science and Education (FASE) has initiated a campaign designed to prevent EPA from dismantling the program.

FASE Associate Darrell Evans notes, "Fully operational, the NHATS program would cost only \$1.2 million a year within the EPA's \$5 billion budget. It is absolutely essential to the agency's mandate under the Toxic Substances Control Act to 'assess chemical risk to the U.S. population,' and cannot be cut without seriously damaging the agency's research and regulatory functions. Clearly, this cancellation has to be considered a form of scientific vandalism."

CSPI Campaigns for Full Disclosure of MSG

(reprinted from *Nutrition Action Healthletter*)

Individuals who are trying to avoid MSG (monosodium glutamate) may consume it unwittingly. For although MSG itself must be declared on food labels, foods may contain added glutamate without saying so. That's because a common food ingredient, hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP) may contain up to 20 percent glutamate.

HVP is made by chemically digesting protein from soybeans, peanuts, wheat, or corn. The resultant mix may legally be described on food labels as "flavoring" — or even as "natural flavoring" — despite the fact that hydrolysis leaves the vegetable protein in a most *unnatural* state.

The Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture should require that, when HVP is present, it must be labeled: "Hydrolyzed vegetable protein (contains MSG)." Consumers have a right to be informed whenever MSG is present in their food.

Feingold members can lend a hand by filling out the form on the reverse side and sending it to Center for Science in the Public Interest.

To: FABA — Conference
23889 Summit Road
Los Gatos, CA 95030

Please send information on the Annual Conference to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

To: FASE
Park Mile Plaza, Suite 215
4801 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90010

I'm concerned about the EPA's proposal to eliminate the National Human Adipose Tissue Survey. Please send me more information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

To: FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
c/o CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST
1501 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

I urge you to require food labels to list "hydrolyzed vegetable protein (contains MSG)," whenever foods contain that ingredient. The terms "hydrolyzed vegetable protein," "flavoring," "natural flavor," and "natural flavoring" are not sufficiently informative to consumers.

Name _____

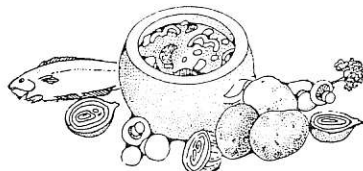
Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Supermarket Suppers: Shop on the Way Home

Try Hearty Fish Chowder, from the *Feingold Cookbook*.



Hearty Fish Chowder

2-3 potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 cup water
1-2 onions, peeled and diced
1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced
3 Tbsp vegetable oil or butter
½ cup flour
1 quart milk
1 pound fish fillet, cut into cubes
1 tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
2 Tbsp soy sauce
3 Tbsp chopped parsley

1. In a covered saucepan, cook the potatoes in the 1 cup water until tender. Set aside — do not drain.
2. In a large pot, lightly saute the onions and mushrooms in the oil or butter.
3. Add the flour slowly, stirring constantly.
4. Add the milk slowly, again stirring constantly (with the whisk) until the mixture is smooth.
5. Add the fish, salt, pepper and soy sauce.
6. Cover the pan and simmer for about 15 minutes, or until fish is tender, stirring occasionally.
7. Add the potatoes along with their cooking water and the parsley. Heat through.
8. Garnish and serve (6-8 servings).

Product Alert

Rodda white marshmallow bunnies and chicks have been on Feingold foodlists for many years, but recent changes in manufacturing techniques have resulted in the addition of synthetic dyes.

Instead of marking the eyes, mouth, etc. by hand, it is now done mechanically. The company found that the natural coloring that had been used did not work in the new machinery, and so they switched to synthetic dyes. The white

portion of this candy is still free of the unwanted additives, according to a Rodda spokesman, but the tiny amount of dye in the animals' features is sufficient to cause a reaction in sensitive children.

Refer to your Foodlist for approved candies such as Sorbee and Palmer (check labels carefully). If you plan to order "Feingold acceptable" candy from Giambri's, be sure to do so as early as possible. Easter this year is April 3rd.

Look for non-food treats to use in your child's Easter basket. Consider making cookies, bars, or muffins.

PIC Report

Several infant formulas have recently been found acceptable for use on Stage I of the Feingold Program.

Thanks go to the Feingold Association of the Northeast and to Dr. Jay Freed for helping us to obtain this information.

The formulas, manufactured by Wyeth Ayerst Laboratories, are:

Nursoy Liquid

Nursoy Powder (contains corn sweetener)

SMA Liquid

SMA Powder

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form. When you eat something like beef, or tomato juice or mushrooms, which have glutamic acid in them, you can handle them since it's bound to those foods.

"It's quite another matter when the glutamic acid is in the form of MSG, because then it's in a free state; in fact, it would be ineffective as a flavor intensifier if it were in a bound state. It has to be in a free state, and this makes all the difference in the world. You get it in your body in a free state, and if you're sensitive to it, you get these reactions."

How Is It Made?

The effects of this flavor enhancer were first noted over 2,000 years ago

when Oriental cooks found that soup stock made from certain seaweeds improved the flavor of other foods.

Today, MSG is most often made from molasses which has been derived from sugar beets or sugar cane.

It is no longer made in this country, but the United States imports about 80 million pounds of the white powder from Japan, and other Asian and Latin American countries.

How Does It Work?

Scientists still do not understand just how MSG functions to intensify the flavor of some foods. A popular theory is that it stimulates the taste receptors on the tongue.

Eating Out

Not only should diners look for MSG in Chinese food, but it is a popular additive in Latin American restaurants as well. Even though Japan exports MSG, you may find Japanese restaurants that do not use it.

If you suspect an MSG sensitivity, speak with the manager before you eat at a restaurant. Most Chinese cooks will leave the MSG out of certain dishes if you ask; and a few advertise that they don't use any at all.

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The Feingold® Associations do not endorse, approve or assume responsibility for any product, brand, method or treatment. The presence (or absence) of a product on a Feingold foodlist, or the discussion of a method or treatment does not constitute approval (or disapproval). The foodlists are based primarily upon information supplied by manufacturers, and are not based upon independent testing.

Previously prepared foods like soup and egg roll generally contain MSG, but it can be left out of main dishes which are made to order. (Feingold members should be wary of sweet & sour sauce, and pork which has been glazed with a red substance. Both could contain red dye.)

Soup — Is It Good Food?

Not if you're sensitive to MSG. The vast majority of soups in the supermarket contain either MSG or HVP, and many brands found in health food stores have hydrolyzed protein.

Soups with a meat base are the most likely to contain either MSG or one of the antioxidant preservatives which are eliminated on the Feingold Program.

If flavor enhancers are removed or reduced below a certain level, one industry representative told *Pure Facts*, the soup will lose its characteristic taste. And if the flavor in a dried mix is provided by beef or chicken fat, then the fat is subject to rancidity, thus the antioxidants are added.

Walnut Acres — the Little Farm that Could

The food industry loves technology, and for good reason. It is technology which permits the development of profitable new products from the raw materials: food.

This approach, according to businessman Robert Anderson, puts the manufacturer in the position of having to create a market for new products, of convincing the buyer that he wants/needs to eat yet another new snack food invention.

Anderson is vice president of Walnut Acres, the Pennsylvania landmark which has been growing, processing and selling foods free of synthetic additives since 1946. He explained that the philosophy of Walnut Acres is to learn what the consumer wants, and then try to fill the need in as nutritious a way as possible.

Among the foods offered for sale are 24 varieties of canned soup, 12 flavors of dried soup mixes, and four chowders — all of which are free of MSG and HVP. In place of flavor enhancers, Walnut Acres uses spices, herbs, yeast, garlic, and soy products such as soy sauce and miso.

"Not so," according to critics, who contend that a soup mix can eliminate the need for antioxidants by using vegetable powders as the base, and avoid flavor enhancers by using more real food.

Make It

Soups take time to make, but are not difficult. To replace condensed cream of mushroom soup for casseroles, make a medium or thick white sauce and add a can of chopped mushrooms (drained).

Chicken or turkey broth can be made either with the uncooked poultry or the leftover bones, skin and scraps from a roast. Put these into a large pot of water right after dinner, and simmer during the evening. Before you go to bed, drain off and refrigerate the broth. The next day, discard the fat which has solidified, and freeze the broth in plastic containers. You'll always have it on hand for soups and sauces. (A microwave oven defrosts broth quickly.)



Canned beef and chicken stews are made with organic meats and poultry. They even offer organic chickens, which are shipped frozen.

Foods can be made without synthetic additives, Anderson maintains, but "you have to have a reason to want to do it." The Walnut Acres philosophy rests upon the down home approach of its founder, Paul Keene.

Anderson maintains that foods can be kept safe without synthetic additives if you use care in handling them. They rely heavily on refrigeration and prepare some foods in smaller batches for quick turnover.

This can only happen if the processor is highly motivated to push past the prejudices of "you can't do it" and find solutions. Keene likes to tell the story of how he refused to put acidic foods into unlined tin cans. At that time cans used lead to solder the seams and acidic foods could cause some of the lead to leach out.

A Bright Spot

The world's biggest food chain — McDonald's — has removed the MSG from its Chicken McNuggets.

Forbes magazine wrote, "For health nuts, there's no easier target than McDonalds. . . . To which McDonalds now seems to be saying: Better to co-opt than to confront."

The change was made at the suggestion of McDonald's Michael Goldblatt, who is both director of new product development and director of nutrition.

Before he joined McDonald's in 1986, Goldblatt, who holds degrees in both law and nutrition, was director of consumer nutrition at General Foods.

(See . . . all those letters and phone calls really do count!)

Pure Facts

Pure Facts is published ten times a year. Subscription rates: \$12 per annum in the U.S., Canada and Mexico; \$16 elsewhere (payable in U.S. currency).

For further information write to: Feingold Association of the United States, Inc., Box 6550, Alexandria, VA 22306. (703) 768-FAUS

Lined cans would not be acceptable to the public, he was told, because "people are used to their tomatoes tasting like tin." (Note: the lining of cans can be a problem for some highly sensitive individuals.) But in this case, as in most others, Keene ignored the conventional "wisdom."

In response to the need for more quickly prepared foods, Walnut Acres has developed a selection of mixes. Prepared breads and cookies as well as two kinds of cakes are available.

Foods can be made commercially without synthetic additives.

Anderson notes that their customers represent a growing number of people who are interested in gourmet foods, not health foods. The primary concern is taste, rather than nutrition.

Food can be purchased at Walnut Acres, but most of it is shipped to customers throughout the United States. Although the company does not promote its products through supermarkets or health food stores, they will fill orders.

A free catalog (with recipe ideas) is available by writing to: Walnut Acres, Penns Creek, PA 17862.

(Many Walnut Acres products are included on Feingold Foodlists.)