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Headache. 1989 Feb;29(2):90-2.



## Aspartame as a dietary trigger of headache.

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### Abstract

Many dietary factors have been implicated as possible precipitants of headache. There have been recent differences of opinion with regard to the effect of the artificial sweetener **aspartame** as a precipitant of headache. To assess the importance of **aspartame** as a dietary factor in headache, 190 consecutive patients of the Montefiore Medical Center Headache Unit were questioned about the effect of alcohol, carbohydrates and **aspartame** in triggering their headaches. Of the 171 patients who fully completed the survey, 49.7 percent reported alcohol as a precipitating factor, compared to 8.2 percent reporting **aspartame** and 2.3 percent reporting carbohydrates. Patients with migraine were significantly more likely to report alcohol as a triggering factor and also reported **aspartame** as a precipitant three times more often than those having other types of headache. The conflicting results of two recent placebo-control studies of **aspartame** and headache are discussed. We conclude that **aspartame** may be an important dietary trigger of headache in some people.

PMID: 2708042 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]



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