



Excitotoxins

What are they?

Excitotoxins are chemicals, usually food additives, that can affect brain function. In sensitive individuals, excitotoxins may over stimulate brain cells.

Common signs and symptoms of overstimulation include: hyperactivity, problems with concentration or attention, headache, joint or muscle pain, addiction and other abnormal behaviors.

It is important to recognize sources of excitotoxins and try to reduce intake of these foods.

Common Sources of Excitotoxins *(Check the ingredients for these)*

Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)/Glutamate

NutraSweet/Aspartame

Preservatives

Natural or artificial flavorings

Seasonings/Spices

Hydrolyzed proteins

Anything hydrolyzed

Maltodextrin

Malted anything

Yeast extract/Autolyzed yeast (extract)

Autolyzed anything

Caseinates

Sodium caseinate

Disodium caseinate

Calcium caseinate

Guar/Vegetable gum

Smoke flavoring

Chicken/Pork/Beef “flavoring” whey protein

Bouillon/Stock/Soup base

Disodium inosinate

Soy additives

Textured protein

MSG / Glutamate

MSG, a form of the amino acid glutamate, is produced synthetically and used as a flavor enhancer in many foods. In its free form, glutamate produces the flavor of certain foods, like tomatoes, some cheeses, and fermented or hydrolyzed protein products. In susceptible individuals, glutamate receptors in the brain may be overstimulated or even damaged from by excess intake of these substances.

Foods High in MSG/Glutamate

Chinese Food

Fast Food

Doritos/Pringles/Flavored potato chips

KFC Fried Chicken, Supermarket turkey and chicken

Sausages/Processed meats

Instant soup mixes/Stocks (Progresso, Lipton, Ramen)

Canned, frozen, and dry entrees

Tomato sauces/Stewed tomatoes

Planter’s salted peanuts

Processed cheese spread, Parmesan cheese

Mayonnaise, catsup, mustard, chili sauce

Molasses

Many salad dressings/croutons

Soy/Worcestershire sauce

Protein powders/Whey powder

Skim, 1%, 2%, or dry milk

Chocolates/candy bars

Low-fat/Diet foods

Cereals, Baked goods from bakeries

Flavored teas/sodas

Resources for a reduced glutamate diet:

Battling the MSG Myth Cookbook by Debbie Anglesey (www.msgmyth.com)

PKU diet from the University of Washington PKU

Clinic (<http://depts.washington.edu/pku/diet.html>)