



The facts about...monosodium glutamate (MSG) and migraine headaches

There is no scientifically established link between monosodium glutamate (MSG) and migraine headaches.

There are many known 'triggers' for headaches, including diet and stress and, the same specific range of foods have been implicated. However, there is no evidence for a connection with MSG.

- The most recent, very thorough, review paper published in the journal *Clinical & Experimental Allergy*¹ concluded, "decades of research have failed to demonstrate a clear and consistent relationship between MSG ingestion and these conditions" (including headaches, flushing, palpitations and asthma).
- A detailed review² of the scientific literature on food-triggered headaches concluded that there is no evidence to support a link between MSG and migraine headaches.

The simple fact is that if MSG triggered headaches then susceptible people would suffer on a daily basis when eating foods such as milk, cheese and vegetables, which are all rich in glutamate. We consume between 10g and 20g of glutamate from our diet, of which glutamate from seasoning or condiments is less than 10%.

MSG is the sodium salt of glutamic acid, an amino acid which occurs naturally in protein-containing foods such as meat, vegetables and dairy products. Glutamate added to food as seasoning represents a small proportion of the glutamate we consume each day as part of a normal diet. The glutamate naturally present in food and the glutamate derived from seasoning are identical and our bodies treat glutamate in exactly the same way no matter what the source.

If you suffer from persistent migraine headaches it is recommended that you seek advice from a medical professional.

For more information about glutamate please visit: www.glutamate.org

¹ Woessner et al; Monosodium glutamate 'allergy': menace or myth?; *Clin Exp Allergy*; May 2009; 39(5): 640-6

² Food triggered migraine: a critical review. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 12:51-651, 1990