

**"NUTRASWEET"—HEALTH AND SAFETY  
CONCERNS**

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**HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON  
LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION  
ON  
EXAMINING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS OF NUTRASWEET  
(ASPARTAME)**

NOVEMBER 3, 1987



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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1987

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,  
Washington, DC.

The committee convened, pursuant to notice, at 9:40 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum, presiding.

Present: Senators Metzenbaum and Hatch.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR METZENBAUM

Senator METZENBAUM. Sorry we are a little late. It has been hailed as the most successful food additive in history. One hundred million Americans use it. It commands over \$700 million in sales. Over 20 billion cans of diet soft drinks containing it are sold each year. And it seems to be in everything—cereal, kids' vitamins, cocoa, puddings, even over-the-counter drugs.

There is no doubt about it. NutraSweet has captured the hearts and the tastebuds of the American consumer.

And why not? It tastes great, contains few calories, and does not cause tooth decay in children. NutraSweet is the dream product. But for some consumers and scientists, the dream may be too good to be true.

The FDA has received close to 4,000 consumer complaints, ranging from seizures to headaches to mood alterations. Studies and letters in the medical journals have warned of possible neurological and behavioral effects in humans, particularly in children and susceptible individuals.

Dr. Richard Wurtman, of MIT, has warned of a potential link to seizures.

Dr. William Pardridge, of UCLA, has raised concerns about excessive consumption by children.

Dr. Louis Elsas of Emory University is worried about possible risks to pregnant women.

Dr. Michael Mahalik at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine warns of the possibility of brain dysfunction.

Dr. Reuben Matalon, at the University of Illinois, has warned about potentially dangerous long-term effects on learning ability.

Dr. Jeffery Bada, a professor of chemistry at the University of California, states that NutraSweet's decomposition products have not been adequately studied.