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## Debunking Medical Myths: Is MSG Unhealthy

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# Is MSG Unhealthy?

Blue 2: Lauren Larson, Enoch Kim, Doo Hee Kim, Shagane Kotcharian, Alejandro Ponce, Sadie Knill

## What exactly is MSG?

Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) is a food seasoning used to enhance salty/savory flavors. Contrary to popular beliefs MSG is not only used in Chinese foods but widely used in many foods. It is also often used as a preservative for many processed foods.<sup>1</sup>

## Does MSG Cause Headache?

MSG consumption was thought to induce headaches. Studies only show significant differences in headache rate at high doses of MSG (solutions at 1.3 % (2 g/150 ml) or more), however, the high doses used in these studies were linked to having an unpleasant taste and stomach discomfort. These events may influence the headache rate in people who easily get migraines or believe they are MSG-sensitive.<sup>3</sup>



## Does MSG Cause Asthma?



It is commonly believed that MSG induces an asthmatic response. However, a research study showed that, based on measured forced air blown out over a second's time between those consuming MSG vs those not consuming MSG, there were no significant differences in the forced air blown out between the groups; essentially, there was no difference in breathing ability/asthmatic symptoms.<sup>7</sup>

## Does MSG Cause Brain Damage?

Many believe that MSG consumption can lead to brain damage. While increased brain glutamate concentration is associated with brain damage and other neurological conditions, there is no significant increase in brain glutamate levels after eating foods containing MSG.<sup>6</sup> Thus, it is unlikely that foods with MSG were the cause of any brain damage.



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