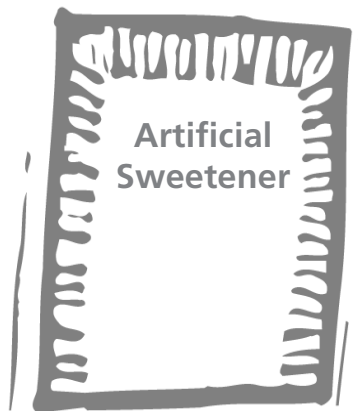


A Second Look at Saccharin

- ▶ In the 1970s, research was conducted on rats to study the carcinogenic effects of saccharin consumption.
- ▶ In 1977, results indicated that out of 200 rats that were fed saccharin, 17 developed bladder tumors. This group was compared to 100 control animals who were not fed saccharin, 2 of which developed tumors.
- ▶ The research performed on rats involved feeding the animals high doses of saccharin, equal to approximately 5 percent of their body weight.
- ▶ As a result of consumer demand for saccharin, in 1977 Congress passed a law prohibiting the FDA from banning the product. However, any product containing saccharin was (and still is) required to carry a warning label.
- ▶ In 1981, saccharin was added to the government's list of suspected carcinogens.
- ▶ Scientists have continued to study saccharin, attempting to discover how it produces tumors in male rats. In general, results from toxicity tests indicate that it is a combination of the high doses fed to the animals and the acidic nature of rat urine that results in cancerous tumors. The factors that seem to cause the development of tumors in rats are not thought to occur in humans.
- ▶ In addition, a 23-year study conducted on monkeys found that saccharin consumption does not have a cancer-causing effect on the primates.
- ▶ Some scientists have argued that it is still too early to consider removing saccharin from the list of suspected carcinogens. They cite epidemiological studies conducted in the early 1980s that pointed to an increase of cancer among some subgroups of artificial sweetener users.



Sources: McGinley, Laurie. "How Sweet It Is," *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 October 1997, p. A1.

Stolberg, Sheryl G. "Expert Panel Rebuffs Bid to Absolve Saccharin," *New York Times*, 1 November 1997, p. A13.