

# Scientific mythconceptions: msg=headaches

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Scientific Mythconceptions Scientific Mythconceptions There is a common perception that Monosodium Glutamate present in food has the capacity to trigger headaches. Monosodium Glutamate is a food flavor commonly used by the Chinese people, especially in soups, meats, and canned vegetable (Baad-Hansen, Cairns, Ernberg, & Svensson, 2010). The perceptions that Monosodium Glutamate triggers headaches are based on controversial anecdotal evidence. A close analysis reveals that scientists have been unable to identify specific evidence or proof that can implicate an MSG. The evidence used to support the mythconception is based on personal accounts that do not represent a sample large enough to be applied to the entire population (McCandless, 2014). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers Monosodium Glutamate safe for human consumption. However, scientists have suggested that a small percentage of the population may be allergic to Monosodium Glutamate (McCandless, 2009).

Monosodium Glutamate contains Glutamate, which serves as an excitotoxin. Scientists have highlighted that Monosodium Glutamate comprises of amino acids and is a sodium salt of Glutamate. According to the World Health Organization, Monosodium Glutamate is safe for use in foods. Efforts to identify evidence suggesting that the Monosodium Glutamate is responsible for triggering headaches have been unsuccessful (Harned, 2012). Even in cases whereby individuals who consume Monosodium Glutamate have headaches, there is not a scientific relationship between the Monosodium Glutamate and the headaches. Scientists are yet to understand any mechanisms that may be responsible for triggering headaches in a small percentage of the population that experiences headaches (Williams &

Woessner, 2009). Therefore, Monosodium Glutamate remains to be a safe flavor enhancer until any scientific evidence of its adverse effects is found.

#### References

Baad-Hansen, L., Cairns, B., Ernberg, M., & Svensson, P. (2010). Effect of systemic monosodium glutamate (MSG) on headache and pericranial muscle sensitivity. *Cephalalgia*, 30(1), 68-76.

Harned, L. (2012). Migraine Headaches and Monosodium Glutamate (MSG). Retrieved on 21st June 2015 from [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/psychology/health\\_psychology/msg.htm](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/psychology/health_psychology/msg.htm).

McCandless, D. (2009). *Information is beautiful*. London: Collins.

McCandless, D. (2014). *Knowledge is beautiful*. New York, NY : Harper Design, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers.

Williams, A. N., & Woessner, K. M. (2009). Monosodium glutamate 'allergy': menace or myth? *Clinical & Experimental Allergy*, 39(5), 640-646. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2222.2009.03221.x.