**A Special Interview with Victoria Inness-Brown**

*By Dr. Mercola*

**DM: Dr. Joseph Mercola, DO**

**VB: Victoria Inness-Brown**

**DM:** Welcome everyone. This is Dr. Mercola. Today, I’m speaking with Victoria Inness-Brown who conducted a two-year experiment on the effects of aspartame, an artificial sweetener that is probably the worst ones on the market.

As a result of this experimentation, she put together three books. They are available on her website which is [www.AspartameExperiment.com](http://www.AspartameExperiment.com) and also through Amazon.

She’s going to be with us today and discuss the results of her findings which interestingly, she funded herself and put together these very detailed meticulous set of animal experiments to really document the adverse effects of these artificial sweetener. Welcome Victoria.

**VB:** Thank you so much Dr. Mercola. It is truly an honor to be talking with you today. I feel like you have done a huge service for all of us. I would like to thank you from all of us for everything you’ve done; your newsletters, your books, your website. It’s just amazing, the body of work you’ve put together.

**DM:** You are most welcome. The intention is really to help preserve the human race. We need to have more people aware of this information so that they can really take corrective action and apply it to themselves and not have future generations really be compromised.

You have done some important work and I think it really adds to the bulk of data that we have that really confirms and reinforces it’s just a nasty choice these artificial sweeteners are specifically aspartame.

Can you describe to our listeners what motivated you to really embark on this process to further identify what the problems were and then going to the specifics of why chose these animal models and this very long analysis that you did.

**VB:** I was concerned about family members who were consuming large amounts of -- especially diet sodas. I had already become aware of possible adverse effects of aspartame. I was doing further research on it and I came across the Bressler report. I noticed that he was talking about sizeable tumors that were reported from the use of DKP (diketopiperazin) which is a breakdown component of aspartame.

I thought that if I did my own experiment that I might be able to actually see some tumors and that I would make photos of them and then provide an additional resource
for people to use to try to get it off the market and to try to convince family members to stop using it.

**DM:** Can you discuss the specifics of exactly what you did with these animals. I think you used mice. I did read your book. It’s been awhile now. It was very compelling. I think one of the most startling aspects of the book are the photographs that you took to document the exposure of what actually happens with the exposure of these animals.

**VB:** It was actually rats. Yes, I agree. I was pretty shocked myself by the size of the tumors and then all of the other adverse effects as well. I have some theories about why my experiment got such amazing results compared to all the other experiments I have read about.

But before I get started on that, I want to give a little bit of details about my experiment. It was actually about a two and a half year experiment. I raised 108 rats. I took 60 of them and used them as controls. There were 30 males and 30 females and then I had 48 -- there were 60 I used as the experimental group and there were 30 females and 30 males and then 48 controls consisting of 24 females and 24 males.

The aspartame group, I actually put the aspartame in their water in the form of NutraSweet. I wasn’t able to purchase pure aspartame because I wasn’t a food manufacturer which I find rather suspect. So I used NutraSweet...

**DM:** But nevertheless this may be a more valid experiment because you are using what actually consumers are using.

**VB:** I was trying to mimic the effect of diet soda. They don’t necessarily put NutraSweet in diet soda.

**DM:** Okay, good point.

**VB:** One of the things I have discovered from my own research when I was writing my book which I also wanted to help future generations myself, as you mentioned earlier, was that the liquid form of aspartame is much more potent than any other form; solid form or capsule form which is used in most of the other experiments.

The other issue though with NutraSweet is that the other components which are dextrose and maltidextrin aren’t necessarily inert. They can have their own side effects. So that might be one reason why I got such amazing results.

**DM:** It’s a relatively simple experiment that you did that pretty much anyone listening to this, if they were motivated could reproduce and see if they could produce similar results. I think in any type of experimentation, one of the concerns that any serious analysis would entail would be to find out who is funding the study. Can you tell us who funded your study? What type of experience you had to give you the confidence to do this type of experiment?
VB: I was kind of laughing to myself when you were asking me who funded the study because I did. I was not responsible to anyone but myself on that study.

DM: The reason I have asked that is because the funding of a study will typically identify any potential conflict of interest. So if you funded the study yourself, the reasonable skeptic would ask what type of conflict? You’re not selling anything. You really don’t have an agenda to approve than to expose the truth.

VB: Right. I totally agree with you on that one. I’m sorry, I don’t remember the second part of your question on that.

DM: What type of experience did you have that provided you with the confidence to embark on this type of process where you felt that you could comfortably do it and be able to take it to completion. That’s a pretty significant commitment, 2-1/2 years.

VB: The kind of experiment that I guess I would attribute to having the confidence in doing the experiment. It had to do possibly with my experience as a technical writer throughout the years where I have taken on projects that were very difficult and successfully completed them and did whatever it took to learn what I needed to learn in order to complete those projects. I had possibly an expanded confidence in that arena which I suppose was transferred to this experiment.

DM: But you were never employed as lab tech or a researcher or did any graduate study in a physiology lab where you were working with animals?

VB: No. I kind of didn’t think it would be that hard. I don’t really think it was that hard. There were a lot of things you had to do but it’s mostly taking care of animals and then videotaping the results and then going through the videos and extracting the photos and stuff like that. It wasn’t that hard of a project. It was just time consuming and involved some physical labor.

DM: It’s just very intriguing to see someone so committed to do that. On the other hand, it serves as a very powerful example of what one person can do without any really serious formal training and just put together a very powerful experiment that really can provide some very useful information. It seems the motivation was to document to your family members the concern that you have with them consuming diet soda?

VB: That was my primary motivation and then I also wanted to provide visual documentation if there were adverse effects; for the anti-aspartame community to help support removing the additive from the market.

DM: Thank you for providing the framework and discussing the basis of the experiment that you conducted. Why don’t you tell our listeners what you found over this 2-1/2 years after giving the experimental group this significant dose of aspartame which I
believe in your project was somewhat comparable to the average daily dose that a
typical adult user of diet sodas would consume.

**VB:** Actually, I’m not sure what the average adult consumes. The amount I gave my rats
was within the acceptable daily limit or acceptable daily intake or ADI set by the FDA
which is 50 mg per kilogram. My females received an equivalent of about...if you
consider cans of diet soda, the aspartame in about 14 cans of diet soda per day. I’m not
sure if the average person consumes that much but I know of people who consume
more than that. My males were receiving about an equivalent of about 13 cans of diet
soda per day.

The kinds of results I got, I was pretty awestruck by. I kept kind of thinking did I do
something wrong. As I mentioned earlier, I believe there are other factors in my
experiment that contributed to the huge range of adverse effects plus the phenomenal
quantity of tumors and the enormity of the tumors especially on the females. Sixty-
seven percent, 2/3 of 20 out of 30 of my females actually developed tumors the size of
golf balls or larger. Twenty-one percent of my males who are on aspartame developed
tumors.

**DM:** To put that on perspective, how big are there rats relative to a golf ball? It could just
help the viewers visualize it. Hopefully, we’ll be able to put some pictures in there as just
an example.

**VB:** Yeah, I can send you some pictures to put in. The length of their bodies would be
something like six golf balls.

**DM:** So it’s pretty significant.

**VB:** Yeah, definitely. That was like a minimum size. Some of the tumors got to be huge
like the size of the palm of your hand.

**DM:** Has this tumor growth been documented in humans or is this something specific to
rats?

**VB:** I have never seen that size of a tumor in a human, relative to a human. It’s almost
the size of a torso in a human. I would imagine in humans they would be excised before
they would get to be that size. A human would notice it and have something done about
it.

**DM:** Did you do any pathological assessment on it? In other words, did you do a biopsy
and have a pathologist look at it and see what type of tumors are they?

**VB:** That was my intention. I had a friend at the time I started who worked in a lab. I was
going to find out from her ideas where I might be able to have that done. But then I was
unable to get in contact with her. I thought maybe she moved back to Texas. Then
actually after the end of my experiment a doctor recommended going to the county veterinarian.

I actually started a second experiment, a generational experiment where I raised different generations of rats giving them aspartame the entire time. I had some of those rats, a pathology assessment of those. I had necropsies done. The tumors that I was able to observe on those rats did indeed turn out to be cancerous. But they also identified tumors that I wasn’t able to see. I believe that it’s possible that 67% tumor rate is a lower boundary from my results.

**DM:** You mentioned that there was a higher percentage in the female rats. Is there any speculation as to why that occurred? Why there is a sex difference?

**VB:** Yes there is about a 3 to 1 rate of tumors in the females. That coincides with what Dr. Roberts discusses in his book Aspartame...Epidemic. Do you remember the name of that book? I know you mentioned that in your book.

**DM:** I forget but if you just type in H.J. Roberts on Amazon and aspartame you can come up with it. It’s probably the most definitive resource on the topic. He did an exhaustive review and compilation.

**VB:** Also the FDA had a much higher percentage about 3 to 1 females reporting adverse effects compared to males. My personal theory is that aspartame is probably estrogeneric or it’s a xenoestrogen which acts like estrogen in the body. I don’t understand why else that would affect...especially a lot of them appeared to be mammary gland tumors.

In a book on rats I read that if they removed the uterus...they were able to reduce the amount of tumors in the rats by removing female organs. I don’t remember specifically which ones they removed at this point.

**DM:** Let’s just interject here at one point to just review the biochemistry for those who are not familiar with the aspartame but it’s a relatively simple chemical and promoted initially -- I don’t know if they (indiscernible 16:19) with this but promoted as being natural because essentially it’s a conjugation or a combination of two natural amino acids which occur on all the proteins which is phenylalanine and aspartic acid.

The problem is that it's linked to an ester bond. This is unnatural. It makes it completely synthetic. When it's consumed, it's rapidly broken down to three products which is really formaldehyde, aspartic acid and the phenylalanine. The problem with amino acids is they are such high concentrations that it really disturbs these very sensitive ratios that can cause loads of other issues.

But one of the most significant ones is this formaldehyde which readily crosses the blood brain barrier and is rapidly converted to methanol which is wood alcohol and is a
really significantly toxic poison. It has its own complications. There is some significant research that suggests it may even lead to MS.

The reason I mentioned that is that it just doesn’t seem that any of those three elements would be linked to sex hormones unless it triggered some type of other biochemical function or reaction to (indiscernible 17:40).

**VB:** I see what you’re saying. There is a water quality expert on PBS about 10 years ago. He was saying that there is something like 2000 chemicals in our water supply that are xenoestrogens that act like estrogens in the body. I’m wondering if maybe…

**DM:** So that’s the other variable. You were giving them tap water.

**VB:** I was giving them well water.

**DM:** Well water from your home?

**VB:** Uuhh.

**DM:** Did you have your well tested for any chemicals?

**VB:** My brother lives across the street and he had his well tested and we’re getting water from the same underground source. He said they found no toxic…

**DM:** It’s unusual where they are but there is no way of knowing unless you look. That would make sense if it was a traditional municipal water supply.

**VB:** I thought that was one of the reasons possibly my control rats were healthier than normal controls because someone mentioned that on one of the blogs that my control rats were too healthy although I didn’t think that they were myself.

**DM:** And their food sources were pretty comparable?

**VB:** Since I performed the experiment I have noticed that some labs use actually special foods for their animals which I…

**DM:** Purina Rat Chow.

**VB:** Well, I did use conventional rat chow that I bought from a local food store which isn’t that healthy in my opinion. At the time I didn’t know that.

One thing I wanted to mention that you were talking about phenylalanine and aspartic acid is that I believe there is a high chance that they’re not natural amino acids in the case of aspartame but they are actually produced synthetically using genetically modified E. coli which can introduce toxic byproducts which I would prefer to avoid.
**DM**: I think most of us would unless you’re part of Monsanto’s cadre of experts and professionals. That is interesting. I think I do remember that. They were produced by genetically modified organisms. That puts a whole different bent in it. So there maybe contaminants in the actual NutraSweet product that are really not identified.

**VB**: Right. The reason is that it produces a very high yield. It’s all about money.

**DM**: Sure. It does produce a high yield but this is such a potent sweetener that is needed in relatively small concentrations. I mean it’s 500-600 times sweeter than sugar. So you’re really looking at milligram amounts for the most part. Even if it’s 10% contaminated it’s 1/10 of a milligram. But it depends on how potent those contaminants are I guess.

**VB**: They have found E. coli in a number of water supplies and sodas throughout the country. There was a study done. It’s hard to say what the source was, not in the water supply within the sodas.

**DM**: Well E. coli but itself is not a significant concern unless it’s really a toxic strain or is in very large quantities because most people they’re not going to have a problem with that but the synthetics, really these artificial toxins that are really not normally found in nature could be of a more serious concern.

**VB**: Another thing is you were talking about the effects of the different breakdown components of aspartame. One of the things that Dr. Blaylock discusses is the holes in the brain that it can cause over time and that they are comparable to those found in Alzheimer’s patients, Parkinson’s patients and Lou Gehrig’s patients. There is an Alzheimer’s epidemic now and that could be possibly one of the causes.

**DM**: Is this from a diketopiperazine?

**VB**: No, the aspartic acid. And then the phenylalanine, as you mentioned, causes an imbalance in the brain which can cause aggressive behavior, violent behavior, suicidal thoughts, depression and lead to an addiction to aspartame. And then of course you mentioned the methyl ester and that breaks down into methanol which breaks down the formaldehyde and then formic acid...

**DM**: Actually, I have that reversed. It breaks down the methanol first and then it’s converted to formaldehyde. The interesting component of that I can see if worked in an anatomy lab. You have relatively large exposures to formaldehyde. Even though that’s toxic, it’s not as bad as methanol. The methanol actually bypasses the blood-brain barrier. Once it’s in there, it turns to formaldehyde which is where most of the damage occurs.

**VB**: Right and formaldehyde is accumulative. One thing about that the aspartame industry claims that methanol is safe in the body that it’s naturally occurring in fruits and vegetables and that is true. For example, on tomatoes and oranges, there is a certain
amount of methanol but it also has the antidote ethanol that comes naturally occurring with it which prevents the methanol from breaking down because the ethanol is processed first and allows the methanol to be excreted through the skin like kidneys…

DM: I think that’s true for wine but for the fruits and vegetables, my understanding is that methanol is bound up in pectin or some other fibers. As a result of that, it’s relatively unavailable for absorption.

VB: That’s interesting. I didn’t know that.

DM: The problem is that once you…that’s in its raw state but once you process it and you put it in a glass jar or plastic and it’s dissociated from its natural state then the longer it’s in there, the more of this dissociation that occurs and the higher the rate of methanol which is now in most tomato products that are relatively high in this methanol. But once you cook them like in the tomato sauce that you’re cooking then it volatilizes so it’s not an issue. But if you’re taking a juice or a canned fruit or something, it can be a real significant issue.

The issue that you mentioned with the ethanol is really the fermented beverages where in fact the ethanol is preferentially metabolized and then the methanol is not and then it’s excreted in the urine and through sweat, or you breathe it out. Actually, if you go into the emergency room with methanol poisoning, one of the treatments is I.V. ethanol.

VB: That’s right. The point is that aspartame doesn’t have any ethanol in it so you’re just getting the methanol without the antidote. That’s not something that the aspartame industry -- apparently they are not aware of that.

DM: I wouldn’t give you so much credit. I just don’t want to let people be aware of that fact. Have you noticed any negative effects on you personally or from any family members from aspartame?

VB: When I did the experiment and actually up until just a few years ago I hadn’t thought of myself personally but then a friend was asking about it. It somehow came up in a conversation and then I have actually become aware of it. I have personally experienced (indiscernible 26:07).

I consumed high amounts of diet sodas for many years. I ate quite a bit of vegetarian meat which are high in MSG for a number of years. I ended up gaining over 100 lbs. My doctor diagnosed me a couple of years ago with metabolic syndrome which is high fat content around the waist and organs and diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Dr. Blaylock has discussed both of those issues in terms of the results from aspartame and MSG.

DM: That’s one of the compelling reasons that most people choose diet sodas or artificial sweeteners in general is that it has less calories and sugars. The obvious assumption is that because of that you’re going to be less likely to gain weight when the
exact opposite appears to be the case from the studies that have been performed and from the people like yourself who undergo this experiment. They actually gain more weight than if they have consumed regular sugar.

It's not really a calorie component. It has to do with more of insulin and leptin resistance and cravings and creating these dependencies that gets into a vicious cycle that essentially makes the weight gain even worse.

VB: It also destroys the part of the brain that processes leptin. Leptin controls the appetite and the fat accumulation so that that mechanism no longer works in the body.

DM: I wasn't aware of that but it's not a surprise. It impairs leptin optimization which is -- I would imagine someone hearing that who is currently taking diet sodas or uses a large amount of artificial sweeteners would be somewhat discouraged from stopping. But the point I would like to make is that the body is pretty resilient and has an intrinsic capacity to self-repair or heal. So even though there is damage that occurs there it's unusual where the body can't repair that.

VB: I totally agree with you with the body self repairing. I'm not sure if the brain has the capability to do that in terms of having researched it but I have a very strong faith in myself and the body being able to heal itself providing you have the right nutrients and getting rid of toxins.

DM: Sure. Don’t mess it up in some other way which is very challenging to do but nevertheless possible.

VB: One of the things I wanted to mention is I noticed a wide range of adverse effects not just tumors but I observed what I believe are neurological disorders including difficulty walking where rats were falling over when they were trying to walk. One rat, both of his hind legs were paralyzed. Another rat, actually a couple of them, developed what in humans would be called torticollis where the head is tilted towards one side.

DM: It's a very painful condition. Usually, there are spasms in the neck muscles. I don't know how painful it is for rats but it certainly is painful in humans.

VB: Another one, its head was turning from side to side which can be a symptom of cerebral palsy. And then I also observed various eye disorders including infected eyes, bleeding eyes, blindness, bulging eyes which is a symptom of Graves disease.

In the generational studies that I mentioned earlier which I never completed because I realized that I wasn’t doing it properly. Two of the rats though in that experiment were born with only a single eyeball. They had two eye sockets each but each of them had just one eyeball. That’s when I finally started believing in my experiment and believing how bad aspartame really is. It affects the genetics.
DM: That’s a big issue. Help me remember the date with respect to the initial approval of aspartame. I know they started in probably the late 60s or early 70s but I think it was approved in the late 70s. Isn’t that correct? 77 or 78 or is it the early 70s?

VB: Sort of the final approval where it really got going was in 1981. Rumsfeld came in. You documented it in your book.

DM: The reason that’s important to know is -- that’s ’81 this is 2011 so that’s 30 years ago and it’s about one generation. Of course, large numbers of the culture and the society didn’t start consuming this in 1981, it probably took awhile before -- that was its initial approval but then I think it became approved for other indications. I think diet soda was several years after that.

VB: I thought it was ’83 sort of.

DM: You’re probably looking almost exactly at one generation. We’re just now beginning to see the offspring of the people who are consuming those for one entire lifespan, 25 years. That is the advantage of using rat models is that it’s quite rapidly accelerating. You can see these changes long before you see them in humans.

VB: There was another observation that I believed was a genetic mutation in that two of the litters appeared to be stunted in terms of growth. They didn’t seem to grow for about six weeks and then after that, they grew to be about half the weight of a normal rat. So that was like fourth generation. It is a real concern.

One of the other things is that it might be affecting the epigenetics as well where it’s not necessarily…the epigenetics are where certain conditions in your environment are affecting your genes which I guess aspartame would be one of those where it’s modifying your genes and then all throughout generations.

DM: It can make you feel so miserable that feeling and change in your mental affect can certainly have an influence in the genetic expression.

VB: There were some other things too that I observed. One of them was skin disorders where I photographed various skin lesions. In one of the rats actually about a third of its skin actually came off. It was pretty bad. Then thinning and yellowing fur were pretty common. Yellow is a symptom of formaldehyde poisoning that you can see in alcoholics consuming wines.

DM: Again, to somewhat reinforce this for our listeners, because these are quite dramatic differences that you’re seeing between your experimental control groups. For the most part, they have virtually every…the same exposure. The only variable you were changing was really this exposure to aspartame in their water virtually because they have the same food. They are breathing the same air. They are in the same cages. All other variables where controlled for. Is that correct?
VB: That’s right. The final thing that I observed was actually obesity in the rats which confirms that aspartame helps you gain weight, something that we are all looking to rid of.

DM: That’s a positive frame on it. I have a few people who are seeking to do that but the unfortunate component of that is the weight that they are gaining is increased fat. Although some people do need to gain weight virtually no one (indiscernible 34:53) the starving people in Third World countries wouldn’t need to gain body fat. They would need to gain muscle. Almost all of us need to lose our body fat percentage.

VB: I do want to mention that there are other factors that in my experiment that I believe contributed to the amazing level of adverse effects. I was talking to a woman from the University of Texas who is conducting aspartame experiments. She told me she envied my results. I thought about that. I was thinking about the various things that I believed cause my results. I was talking to her about it and she actually wants to try to reproduce my experiment at one point.

The first one is that I put aspartame in their drinking water. As I mentioned before, the liquid form of aspartame is much more fully absorbed and much more quickly absorbed into the body than the solid form. Most experiments were done with the solid form and most human experiments actually put the solid form in capsules to disguise its taste in double blind studies.

Actually, one study I came across showed that the aspartame itself breaks down immediately in the intestines. So you can’t test for it in the blood but you can test for its byproducts like phenylalanine. So they found that the liquid form of aspartame generated twice the amount of phenylalanine in the blood after one hour when compared to the solid form.

Another thing I believe was probably highly significant is that I had an air compressor near my rats. The reason I believe this is because I mentioned that I did a generational study and I actually ended it when I realized that I wasn’t able to basically (indiscernible 37:18) was keeping weren’t adequate. In the generational study, I felt I had to be extremely vigilant. So I stopped that and I stopped giving them aspartame but I continued caring for the rats.

Actually, at some point, the compressor broke down. I was using it to water orchards and it broke down and I stopped using it. The rats actually…several months later, I took account of them and I found only one tumor. There had been others that had died before that because it was like four generations.

I had 50 rats and there was only one with a tumor and their fur was luxuriant, it was thick, shiny. They were the healthiest. They were way healthier appearing than any of the rats in the previous experiment either the controls or the aspartame group.
I feel that the noise of the compressor which was on maybe 12 hours a day probably affected their immune systems so that the aspartame and the other things that I felt were negative in their environment -- their adverse effects were more manifest.

**DM:** But in some ways, that maybe a more representative experiment of what occurs in the human environment because almost all of us are exposed to these extraneous environmental variables.

**VB:** I agree.

**DM:** The reason that it’s important is because as in your experiment demonstrates there appears to be a powerful synergy between those. That one plus one doesn’t equal two, it equals three or more and it exacerbated the effects even worse. It’s interesting.

**VB:** Actually, that’s a really good point because aspartame has been…Betty Martini is constantly talking about the multiplicative effect of aspartame. It’s in drugs that multiplies the effects of the drug.

There was a study done where they took four additives. They were trying to evaluate the effect of different food additives in children’s food and they took brilliant blue aspartame, monosodium glutamate and quinoline yellow. They studied the effects of each of those additives individually and then they studied the effects of combining those two additives.

They found that aspartame and quinoline yellow had seven times the adverse effects of either of those two additives individually. So that would be like say if you had aspartame it caused two tumors and quinoline yellow to cause two tumors individually. Combined, they would cause 28 tumors. So it’s a huge effect.

One of the things about my experiment is I use NutraSweet in their drinking water which has dextrose and that other thing I mentioned earlier, I have to remember it. Both of those ingredients can cause adverse effects as well. If you look at Rx List, dextrose has a number of adverse effects associated with it. I think that it’s possible that the multiplicative effect of aspartame in NutraSweet causes other effects to be...

**DM:** Dextrose is relatively benign for the most part. It’s just simple glucose. It’s a nutrient in every animal cell. Actually, I think in every cell, all around. Unless it’s contaminated of some sort, the dextrose should be relatively benign.

**VB:** If you look up in Rx List they do show adverse effects of that sort.

**DM:** Well, it can raise your blood sugar. It depends on the quantity. In small quantities, dextrose is relatively benign. It’s just (indiscernible 41:51). It wouldn’t be causing any problems.
VB: That was why that combination of variables is why I thought my female rats developed more tumors than even the previous studies. I think I got something like three times the tumors of the previous studies of the females.

DM: Any serious investigator or scientist has certainly been called to question the results of your study because you're not a professional. I'm not disputing that. I'm just saying that's what's going to happen.

I'm wondering if you can review for our audience, the results of basically legitimate scientific researchers. This is their full time job and they get paid for it. That have actually done very comprehensive studies far more comprehensive and exhaustive than yours.

I'm thinking of the Italian researcher who I think published a few years ago some very significant findings on aspartame. I'm wondering if you could review those.

VB: Well they found increased lymphomas and leukemia and other types of tumors but again they used solid food in the experiment.

DM: Interesting.

VB: The solid food can…for example, if I had mixed aspartame in with my rat chow it would have fallen to the bottom because it had basically grains and alfalfa pellets and things that wouldn’t mix well with just crystalline aspartame. I strongly believe that there is a big difference between ingesting the liquid form and the solid form.

DM: That’s interesting because even during the solid form, he still got pretty much indisputable results. It was widely recognized as one of the more definitive studies documenting the toxicity of aspartame.

VB: Part of that is because he did a lifetime study which I also did. Most aspartame experiments cut off at most at two years. Many of the aspartame experiments were done for one day a week, three weeks and then they do this huge amount of studies that are very small that are designed to, in my opinion, show no adverse effects and then they claim that there is 200 studies that prove it’s safe which to me is suspect because all of the studies that were done by independent researchers show adverse effects.

DM: I forget that researcher who did that. I can see his face but I can’t remember his name. I think he was a psychiatrist. He was an assistant professor at a university.

VB: Is that Wurtman?

DM: I think it was Wurtman. It was very intriguing. There were about 90 studies. It’s like 80 or 90 percent of the studies that were funded by the industry showed negative
results. And then the exact converse occurred with those that were independently funded.

**VB:** That brings you back to what you were saying about the FDA in your book *Sweet Deception.* You had that amazing interview with Dr. David Graham. He’s basically talking about how his superiors at the FDA believed that their clients are actually industry whereas the FDA is tasked to protect the consumer.

In my opinion it’s like say your father gives a lot of money to a university and you’re a student there. The administration influences the faculty to give you good grades but not only that, you’re allowed to set your own curriculum, set up your own projects, grade your own projects and turn those grades in to the teachers and then they just turn them over to the administration and say, “Yeah, he did all these stuff and we’ll give him his diploma.” It’s just like a total setup in favor of industry at the FDA.

**DM:** Not all corporations are that evil but unfortunately, perhaps to review the history of this, I believe that NutraSweet or aspartame was initially brought to market by Monsanto and then changed hands several times. I think it is. Is that correct?

**VB:** It was actually G.D. Searle that was then purchased by Monsanto in 1985.

**DM:** So Searle then Monsanto. I knew Monsanto had its evil hands in there in some way. The point I want to make is that bringing it up to date now, outside of the artificial sweetener distributed. I mean that was really a pittance compared to what they have done now with really potentially destroying humanity and putting their influence and control in virtually almost all the plants in the planet through their technology of genetically modified organisms.

They are very clever. They have really essentially have been able to infiltrate nearly 10 people into the Federal government; the entire regulatory area. Vilsack is the head of the United States Department of Agriculture. There is literally half a dozen. They have a former…their former chief counsel is now in the Supreme Court, Clarence Thomas and half a dozen other people who have significant influence in regulatory decisions on this.

So essentially what we have is a fascist state where there is this merger of the government and corporations. Not all but some that essentially just rubberstamp these decisions. Monsanto has started that nonsense 30 years ago. They graduated to other even more pernicious approaches. But it is a challenge.

It doesn’t mean they’re going to win but it does help to understand what the problem is and that you can’t rely on the Federal government to protect us anymore. They’re just not going to do it. It’s too late. They have been infiltrated. You have to understand that they are not there to protect you. They are there to protect and serve the corporate interest.
So it’s incumbent upon you to do your own research, to be your own healthcare professional and make these decisions yourself and not to rely on the industry and certainly the media, the traditional media to tell you the truth.

**VB:** I did some research on genetically modified foods as part of my research that I did to try to understand my experiment and the effects of the food that I gave them. Corn and soy beans are two of the most prevalently modified foods on the market.

**DM:** Each of them are over 90% in the United States.

**VB:** Wow, I haven’t heard that statistic on corn.

**DM:** Yeah, it’s up to 90%.

**VB:** It’s scary and then they use atrazine…

**DM:** Cottonseed oil and then canola oil too. Just last week alfalfa, despite the fact that 92% of the current alfalfa crop is grown without herbicides and the main benefit of doing the genetically modified alfalfa is to put the roundup resistance to them and they don’t even need it. They don’t even need it.

**VB:** That’s so scary because that can cross pollinate into other crops.

**DM:** Widely cross pollinate it - five miles.

**VB:** Eventually, destroy the organic food industry, in terms of alfalfa and milk and things like that.

**DM:** It’s a big issue. I was just at an interview yesterday with the Organic Consumers Association -- we’re going to be working with them to form a collaborative effort to help develop a resistance. As we were recording this there is a big turmoil going on in Egypt which is something, you know, in a similar basis where the bulk of the population just got fed up and said, we’re not taking this anymore. We can do the same thing in this country and exert our influence and demand our rights with respect to the protection of the future of our food supply.

**VB:** That’s great. I know in Europe they had a big to do about genetically modified foods there and then refused to allow them in their food supply at least they might be sneaking them unnoticed.

**DM:** There is no formal restriction but there is existentially a business decision because of the bulk of the population just chose not to do that. They know it was suicide and they weren’t able to manipulate the government to avoid them from labeling it. So they had to put a label on and people wouldn’t buy it so they didn’t have a choice. They weren’t going to include it otherwise they wouldn’t be able to sell their products. That’s what we need to do in this country.
VB: Yeah, that's what we need to do here. That may be the only way to do it too because as you mentioned the stronghold in the government of Monsanto in those positions of power. It’s overwhelming and frightening but we are the consumers. We have the power to spend our money on the products we want as long as they don’t destroy the organic food industry.

DM: The other version of that too is that we can form local groups in our local communities not in a national level because they have got that corner covered but locally, we can make rules that require these providers of food supplies to do labeling and mandate that they do it in our community. So if you get enough of that that’s going to change the whole system too. So we’re going to hit them on two fronts.

Let’s back to the NutraSweet and tie the loose up. I think one of the obvious questions now is -- I don’t know if you have done anything on this but we’re actually going to enlighten our listeners on this -- the newest kid on the block is the cousin of NutraSweet or aspartame which is Neotame which is essentially a different model they have been able to patent as another artificial sweetener but is fairly similar to aspartame. I wonder if you can comment on that.

VB: I’m familiar with it. I haven’t done extensive studies on it in terms of researching about it and stuff. What I am wondering is whether or not it has a phenylalanine content.

DM: It does, I think.

VB: That they don’t have to label it. Phenylketonuria (PKU) if it’s just put in factory foods willy-nilly are going to start having reactions to it. I just find that atrocious.

DM: I wouldn’t be surprised if they have been hailed to have bypassed that labeling requirement. Certainly, we have seen more shocking changes occur.

VB: That’s one of the things about aspartame is they can just label it as natural flavoring. I don’t understand why they don’t have to put warnings to PKUs on those labels but -- well, they don’t care about our health in any other way so why should they…sorry to be so skeptical.

DM: It’s not skeptical, it’s just being honest. It’s the truth. I don’t know the history of how it was required to put on there to begin with. There is a lot of small amount and most likely anyone with PKU will not really suffer serious consequences likely to large amounts of this because it’s such a tiny level. It’s not surprising that they would be able to exclude that in future products, at least part of the labeling.

VB: I’m sorry I can’t do so many on Neotame other than what I said already. I do believe they have permission to put it in foods without labeling.

DM: And you haven’t studied that in your animals?
VB: No. I was actually thinking about doing a Splenda study but I am afraid my days of
doing rat studies are over.

DM: Even though I wrote a book on Splenda -- the primary reason I did it because it
was new to the market. They were really trying to pull off a fast one on everyone and
claim that it was this natural sweetener when actually it was further from a natural
sweetener (indiscernible 54:55). From my review, it seems that aspartame is
significantly more toxic than Splenda.

VB: That's kind of what I came across too.

DM: If I was forced to have one or the other, I would definitely have Splenda. Not that
either are good for you. They're both probably have similar side effects of this weight
gain which is really a central core of this. It causes so much damage. They have their
own intrinsic toxicities and should be avoided. There is no question sugar is safer.

VB: Like it can shrink the thymus gland by up to 40% and that's part of your immune
system. When I was doing my research on aspartame to write my books, I would get
ideas like, I wonder if it does this. Every single time, I would find information
substantiating my hypothesis.

All of the adverse effects that I observed in my rats I was able to find instances in
human beings having the same problems. I didn’t have that same kind of experience
with Splenda although Splenda is relatively new to the market and it’s possible that
we’re going to come across a lot more adverse effects as time goes on.

DM: Maybe these toxic exposures require a long number of years and pretty relatively
chronic influences to make a difference. This is what we’re seeing with smoking. You
don’t die from lung cancer for a few months or a few years of smoking. It takes awhile.

VB: That’s why I think a lot of those aspartame studies are ridiculous because they give
you a huge amount aspartame for one day and then they say it doesn’t cause diabetes.
Yet, it's the chronic effects of like 20 years of exposure where the formaldehyde builds
up in the system and the phenylalanine permanently changes your brain chemistry and
the aspartic acid causes holes in your brain. At some point you start experiencing the
adverse effects of those things but not right away.

DM: The challenge of course is to take this information and use it practically. Certainly
for yourself when listening to this I hope that they are convinced enough not to be using
them and then your friends and family. That’s more of a challenge. It’s difficult to preach
at them. I remember attending a birthday party for my brother and my little niece was
dipping strawberries in NutraSweet. I couldn’t really say much because it would cause a
family challenge.

VB: I understand.
DM: Even though I would have gawk at it, you have to bite your tongue sometimes. Still, we can have influence or that we can certainly have discussions and seek to educate and inform others. What other actions you think you could do to help get aspartame actually off the market?

VB: Before I answer that question, I would like to say that I had mentioned that I started this experiment because family members who were consuming large amounts of especially diet sodas and that I was able to get some family members to review my book for their feedback. It did have the effect of -- one person that was consuming the most actually cut way down on it.

My book is one way to get people to stop especially, people who have looked at the photos one time when I was writing it like five years ago tell me, “I’m still not using aspartame.”

DM: It’s a very powerful motivator when you see the photographs of the rats and the exposure to aspartame. It really hits home. It’s not some very convoluted, difficult to follow technical study that academically is going to tell you that it will increase your risk for cancer. You actually see these cancers in the rats, I mean, they are massive.

I think it is a powerful motivation and certainly, anyone who is listening to this and has a family member that’s exposed to it -- it’s certainly worth a try to give them a copy of your book and show them the pictures.

VB: I have basically three books on the same topic. One has colored photos. One has black and white photos. The third one is a shortened version of the one with colored photos where I leave out all most of the protocol information. I have all the references in the larger books are stripped out. I stripped out the index and made it a simpler form which I didn’t actually send you.

DM: It doesn’t matter. The first one was good enough. I’m never going to have aspartame.

VB: I did a third one to make it more affordable to buy the colored version. To me the colored version is just so much more powerful.

DM: The black and white was still pretty compelling too. I’m sure they are even more powerful in color.

VB: Back to your question about how to get it off the market, I believe that it’s here to stay as long as people buy it because so many people like yourself have tried so long to get it off the market. Dr. Blaylock, Atty. James Turner, Betty Martini, Dr. Bowen and Dr. O’Neill and many other have tried to get it off the market. The FDA…they are just looking the other way.
One of the things I wanted to mention earlier is the FDA is tasked with validating safety and efficacy of a drug. Considering that aspartame was discovered as a…aspartame is really a drug. One of the things that we have never gone about trying to get it off market is the efficacy. It’s not good for losing weight. It makes you gain weight. It’s not good for diabetics because it causes diabetes. So it’s neither safe nor effective.

**DM:** I think it might be approved under the food ad, not the drug ad.

**VB:** That’s right, you don’t have to put a label.

**DM:** It has totally different standards. It is sweet. They are not ever going to take that away. It truly is sweet. The other alternative though for people who do like sweeteners -- there is nothing wrong with sweets, it’s part of life -- there are healthier alternatives like stevia. Many people object to the taste but I think it’s similar the way you found the liquid version was more toxic. Liquid stevia seems to be more effective as a sweetener and has less of the side effects. Some people object to this such as the aftertaste. They actually have flavored stevia in the store like French vanilla. I think that’s pretty good.

**VB:** I use stevia. I actually don’t mind the taste. One thing I would recommend avoiding though is Truvia because it only has a little tiny bit of the extract of stevia in it. For me it’s false advertising. I would suspect it of having genetically modified chemicals in it as well or not genetically modified but chemicals made using genetically modified E. coli bacteria.

**DM:** Best to get stevia.

**VB:** Stay with stevia. Stevia is a natural extract of plants.

**DM:** You can even grow it yourself.

**VB:** I actually have a stevia plant. It died though. To get it off the market, I would say just don’t buy it.

**DM:** Yeah. It’s probably the best approach. It’s easy enough to avoid although interestingly, they create all these new products that they seek to sell. The perception and one of the emerging big product categories is bottled water. For anyone listening to this do the experiment. Go to your grocery store and look at these bottled waters. Many of them now that are flavored bottled waters and they have don’t have any calories in it. If you ever drink it, you say, “Gosh, this tastes so sweet. How could it taste so sweet?” If you look at the label and look carefully, it’s loaded with artificial sweeteners. It’s basically dyed water is what I would call it.

**VB:** That’s a new one for me.

**DM:** I did a video on that a few years ago. The part we even didn’t mentioned is that you have to be careful. You have to read the labels.
VB: Don’t buy stuff with natural flavorings either because that’s one of the code words for aspartame.

DM: Is it natural flavoring…? That’s sad.

VB: Betty Martini recommends making food from scratch.

DM: Well, it’s always the best. Ninety percent of the money that people spend on food in the United States is for processed food. It’s a challenge though because the processed food tastes typically better than much of the food that we’re going to make and it’s certainly easier and from a time perspective, if you value your time, it actually is far less expensive to do it. It really requires a commitment to staying healthy and avoiding disease to make that type of change. I think it’s worth it and certainly worth the investment.

VB: One of the things too is…are you familiar with Dr. John Garst? He’s an anti-aspartame activist.

DM: No.

VB: He goes on any blog that’s anti-aspartame and he supposedly debunks it. His main thing is the use of folic acid which helps protect against the formaldehyde poisoning. I want to mention if you do want to continue to consume aspartame make sure you get plenty of folic acid in your diet.

DM: It’s just really hard to imagine anyone who is going to continue taking aspartame. I have some very strong feelings on it. If you know this information and you choose to do it continually, you kind of deserve what you’re going to get. It’s just not rocket science. It’s going to damage your health. It’s not that hard to get off of. It really isn’t.

VB: Some people have a real hard time with it. Dr. Roberts mentions in his book quite a bit about addiction and actually 60% of the aspartame molecule breaks down in to methanol which is wood alcohol which is the most toxic form of alcohol and is addictive.

The other addictive component is the phenylalanine which as I mentioned before causes depression, suicidal thoughts, violent behavior, and aggression. That actually changes the chemistry of the brain so that you want more and more because it affects the dopamine levels.

DM: Like any addiction, you can get off of this. It’s just a matter of weaning yourself and having the mental discipline to do it. There are tools like turbo tapping which is a form of Emotional Freedom Technique where you tap on this acupuncture meridians which can actually help you facilitate the physical addiction that one has.
There are tools. Someone has to at least try to do that. Just to continue in this craziness and justify and persistently doing it because it’s addictive is really a force.

**VB:** Yeah, you’re right. But at least if people are going to continue after listening to this, at least they’ll be more aware of that when they do start having problems they’ll be more aware that it is caused by aspartame and they will be more likely to stop using it at that point.

**DM:** Are there any other comments you would like to make about the topic?

**VB:** I would once again like to express my appreciation to you for having me on, for interviewing me. It’s been a real pleasure talking to you. I really, really value what you’ve been doing with your life and future generations. You just are making the world a better place, in my opinion.

**DM:** I think we all want to do that. Fortunately, I have been given the opportunity to make a difference. But a lot really can make a difference. There is no question. It just takes one person. There is really nothing special about me. I went to med school but I just had a passion for technology and staying healthy and just combined them. There is going to be a lot of opportunity for every one single person listening to this to make a difference. That’s what we all want to do.

The fight here is going to be at the local level. We have an initiative where we’re actually putting together collaborative groups in all the major communities in the country so people can volunteer and participate and educate others and really make a profound difference, not only for your local community but for the future generations because this is a fight. It really is a battle. People need to understand that.

I thank you for the work you’ve done in really helping create this powerful motivational tool for those who are currently addicted to this; this form of artificial sweeteners that really shouldn’t be in our lives. It’s going to be good to help many people get off and be healthier. Thank you for your work.

**DV:** Thank you so much.