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Influence of pro-algesic foods on chronic pain conditions.

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Abstract

This paper examines current knowledge about putative "pro-algesic" dietary components, and discusses whether limiting the intake of these substances can help improve chronic pain. Although there is a common impression that numerous food components, natural and synthetic, can cause or worsen pain symptoms, very few of these substances have been investigated. This article focuses on four substances, monosodium glutamate, aspartame, arachidonic acid, and caffeine, where research shows that overconsumption may induce or worsen pain. For each substance, the mechanism whereby it may act to induce pain is examined, and any clinical trials examining the effectiveness of reducing the intake of the substance discussed. While all four substances are associated with pain, decreased consumption of them does not consistently reduce pain.

KEYWORDS: 6-omega polyunsaturated fats; arachidonic acid; aspartame; caffeine; diet; fibromyalgia; glutamate; headache

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