Food Emulsifiers Linked to Gastrointestinal Disease

When you eat something from a box, can, or jar, chances are you've eaten an emulsifier. Emulsifiers like xanthan gum, any and all lecithins, and carrageenan extend the shelf life of products and improve their texture. Unfortunately, a recent study published in Cancer Research says they also promote intestinal inflammation, foster the growth of harmful bacteria, and increase the risk of tumors and colon cancer.

The Studies

This was not the first study on the emulsifiers and their impact on health. A previous study found that a group of healthy mice fed a diet including 1% of a commonly used emulsifier were unable to properly control their blood sugar levels, ate more, and gained more weight. An examination of the mice's gut tissue revealed signs of low-level inflammation. In the same study, a group of mice predisposed to intestinal disease fed the same amount of emulsifiers saw an increase in the symptoms of conditions like inflammatory bowel disease and colitis. The emulsifiers increased the amount of harmful bacteria living deep in the protective mucous in the gut, increasing the potential for irritated and inflamed intestinal tissue.

The results of the previous study dovetail nicely into the most recent emulsifier study. In the previous study, the emulsifiers caused inflammation and increased the mice's risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. The study released in November 2016 found that the regular consumption of emulsifiers disrupted the balance of the gut and increased the

growth of colorectal tumors and rates of colon cancer. This makes sense as cancer thrives in an inflamed environment where damaged cells provide food for it.

For both of these studies, the mice consumed emulsifiers in amounts proportional to the amount found in processed foods. Federal food regulations limit the amount of a particular emulsifier to 1 or 2 percent. The regulators don't, however, place any kind of limit on the number of emulsifiers that can be present in any given food. The mice in these studies were only exposed to two emulsifiers, polysorbate 80 and carboxymethylcellulose. A basic, gluten-free loaf of white sandwich bread from Udi's (probably the most well-known and easily accessible gluten-free brand of bread) has four added emulsifiers, xanthan gum, guar gum, sodium alginate, and locust bean gum. If one percent of two different emulsifiers can disrupt the intestinal microbiome in a significant way, what does one percent of four different emulsifiers do? Now imagine the filling between the bread also contains an emulsifier or two. That amount of emulsifying food additives causes serious gastrointestinal health issues in mice. Do we know what it's doing to humans?

But We Aren't Mice

The biggest issue with a study like this is the fact that we aren't mice, and our diet requirements are different. A study like this on humans could be more difficult, in part due to the proliferation of these compounds. It's also worth mentioning that only two emulsifying agents were used in this study, polysorbate 80 and carboxymethylcellulose. Both of these emulsifiers are more processed than "natural" emulsifiers like lecithins and gums, and comparing the results found in this study with a study focusing on different emulsifiers might provide more answers.

Recommended: *Sugar Leads to Depression – World's First Trial*

Proves Gut and Brain are Linked (Protocol Included)

But You Already Knew That, Didn't You?

So why does it matter? It's only a study on lab mice that doesn't actually prove anything, right? This study doesn't change anything, but not for the reason you may think. Emulsifiers and most importantly, the processed food where you find them, are not good for you. This isn't a matter of "if only we knew more." Do the details make a difference when the universally acknowledged healthy lifestyle is the lifestyle that preaches whole foods and avoids the processed?

We live in the real world though and unless you're homesteading in a big way, a box, can, bag, or jar will eventually make its way into your kitchen. You cannot escape the emulsifiers. Carrageenan, gums, and lecithins are some of the more easily identified emulsifiers, but until writing this article, I had no idea what polysorbate 80 actually did. Reading the label is imperative. If it reads more like a science kit than a recipe, your gastrointestinal system will not thank you.

Recommended Reading:

- *How to Detoxify and Heal the Lymphatic System*
- *What Is Carrageenan?*
- *Antibiotic Side Effects Are Contagious – C. Diff Infections Are On The Rise*
- *How Bacteria Is Evolving – Should We Be Worried? (the answer is yes!)*

Sources:

- *This Common Processed Food Ingredient Causes Cancer in Mice* – Time Magazine
- *Common Food Additive Promotes Colon Cancer in Mice* –

ScienceDaily.com

- *Food Additives Linked to Weight Gain, Inflammation* – livescience.com