

## The Aluminum in our Foods

In the world of Alzheimer's research, aluminum is the most hotly debated metal. As a result of research performed in the 1970's, aluminum became a suspect in the Alzheimer's epidemic; but to this day, the question has not been settled. French, Canadian, and UK studies of tap water showed that the higher the aluminum content, the more frequent cognitive decline; however researchers still debate whether aluminum is a problem or not. Many authorities feel that small amounts of aluminum do little harm and that your kidneys ought to be able to eliminate the incidental traces you might ingest in your drinking water and other day-to-day exposures.



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But other authorities feel the evidence against aluminum is too strong to ignore, and in 2011 published a comment in the International Journal of Alzheimer's Disease that there is growing evidence for the link between aluminum and Alzheimer's disease. They also cite that it is widely accepted that aluminum is a recognized neurotoxin which could cause cognitive deficiency and dementia in the brain and may have various adverse effects on the central nervous system.

So what are we to do? Since our nutritional requirement for aluminum is ZERO, there is no need to risk our brain health. Aluminum has no role in brain function, nor does it play a part in any other aspect of human biology. We cannot avoid it all, but choosing aluminum-free products will help us steer clear of major exposures.



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Large amounts of aluminum are found in many foods. How can that be? The U.S. Food and Drug Administration considers certain aluminum-containing food additives to be GRAS – Generally Regarded as Safe – so food manufacturers are free to use them. Aluminum compounds serve as emulsifying agents in cheese, especially on frozen pizza. It is common in baking powders and products prepared with them. It is in foil and cookware, and your spaghetti sauce will pick up a substantial amount of aluminum from an aluminum pot. It's in soda cans (which can leach aluminum into the products they hold, especially the longer the product sits in the can).

In addition to aluminum additives being included in pizza cheese and crust, baking powders and soda cans, other sources of aluminum in our foods can include: creamers, pancake mixes, microwave popcorn, tortillas, pickle relish, muffins,

donuts, cakes (anything that uses baking powder, self-rising flour, or salt); restaurant biscuits, breadsticks, and soft tacos. Other products can include lotions, shampoos, cosmetics, lip balm and soaps.

**Tips to lessen your exposure risk:** Read your labels! Choose aluminum-free baking powders (widely available in most stores); unfortunately, restaurants are not likely to tell you what sort of baking powder they use, and their pancakes can contain substantial aluminum traces without you knowing it. Skip the single serve creamers, powdered creamers, and salt packets – they often contain sodium aluminosilicate, an anti-caking agent. Don't allow aluminum foil to come in direct contact with food while baking – use parchment paper or wax paper as a buffer. If you use antacids, choose aluminum-free varieties; Maalox gets its brand name from the MAgnesium and ALuminum hydrOXide it contains. It can easily deliver a thousand times more aluminum than you would get from a day's worth of food. Aluminum is also found in Mylanta and Gaviscon. Some over the counter medicines use aluminum as a coloring agent....again, read your labels. Common antiperspirants contain aluminum, which passes through the skin and directly into the bloodstream; choose deodorants which do not contain ALUM, or any aluminum compound. Consider a water filtering unit which can effectively remove aluminum from tap water.

For your best protection, consume a whole food, plant-based diet, beware of antacids and certain deodorants, decrease your intake of processed foods, and carefully read the labels of any packaged food before you purchase. *The "Plan A" Diet* can help you do just that! Visit our website, [www.cydnottter.com](http://www.cydnottter.com). (Sources: Power Foods for the Brain, Dr. Neal Barnard)