

MSG in Chinese food isn't unhealthy, you're just racist, activists say

For years, monosodium glutamate, a food additive known as MSG, has been branded as an unhealthy processed ingredient mainly found in Chinese food, despite a lack of supporting scientific evidence.

People have consumed MSG throughout history, according to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) — but the debate over its health effects began in 1968, when a man wrote a letter to the New England Journal of Medicine, complaining of numbness after eating at Chinese restaurants. A 1969 scientific paper identified MSG as "the cause of the Chinese restaurant syndrome, " and warned that it caused "burning sensations, facial pressure, and chest pain."

That's not to say it was scientifically proven. The FDA set up an independent inquiry into MSG in the 1990s — which ultimately concluded that MSG is safe.

Still, it was too late to contain public fear and anxiety. MSG had effectively been vilified in the American imagination, and was **shunned** for decades afterward.

shun 避开; 回避

This perception, which activists argue is outdated and racist, is so widespread that the Merriam-Webster dictionary has an entry for the term "Chinese restaurant syndrome."

Now, activists have launched a campaign called "Redefine CRS." Headed by Japanese food and **seasoning** company Ajinomoto, the online campaign urges Merriam-Webster to change its entry to reflect the scientific consensus on MSG — and the impact of misinformation on the American public's perception of Asian cuisine.

seasoning 调味品

"To this day, the myth around MSG is ingrained in America's consciousness, with Asian food and culture still receiving unfair blame, " said the company in its campaign website. "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome isn't just scientifically false — it's **xenophobic**."

xenophobic 恐惧外国人的; 排外的