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NEWS

NEW SODIUM-FREE SALT SUBSTITUTE

. . . "First came aspartame, a simple compound with the taste of sugar but without the calories. Now there is ornithyltaurine, with the taste of salt but without the sodium. Makato Tada, Ichizo Shinoda, and Hideo Okai of Hiroshima U, recently synthesized ornithyltaurine and three other compounds that mimic the taste of salt. Since none of the new chemicals contains sodium, their discovery is good news for the estimated 13% of Americans whose doctors have put them on low or no-sodium diets because of high blood pressure or other disorders. Moreover, say the chemists, the impostors lack the bitter after-taste of the currently available salt substitute, potassium chloride. . . . The researchers say that ornithyltaurine, the saltiest of the synthetic peptides found so far, is twice as salty as the real thing; most of the new monosodium glutamate-like compounds are about as strong as their natural counterparts."

[(In *Science 85* 6(2):8, 12, Mar 85). Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 16, April 22, 1985, p. 12 (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA.)]

GRAVITY WAVES AND SPACEQUAKES

. . . "Einstein's equations revealed that if a mass were suddenly accelerated or jostled to and fro, it would generate ripples in that sheet of space-time, similar to the way electrons moving along an antenna generate radio waves in the air. But while such electromagnetic waves travel *through* space, gravity waves actually disturb the fabric of space. This space-time rippling occurs every time you bang your fist on a table or jump rope, but only the most awesome cosmic events emit any appreciable waves. Particles and planets caught in the path of such a wave would experience space itself contracting and expanding. Such a 'spacequake' would provide astronomers with an entirely new form of information and the universe. 'Visible and infrared light, radio waves, and X-rays are emitted almost entirely by individual atoms, molecules, and high-energy particles,' explains Kip Thorne [Caltech]. 'Gravitational waves, by contrast, are emitted by the bulk motions of huge amounts of matter, objects that are vibrating, collapsing, or exploding.' More important, these periodic distortions in the structure of space-time can blithely pass through interstellar dust, planets, and galaxies as if they weren't there. Nothing can be absorb them. This penetrating power may allow astrophysicists to observe cosmic processes that, for now, can only be imagined on a computer graphics terminal—from the last millisecond gasp in the life of a star to the titanic nllision of two black holes."

[(Marcia Bartusiak in *Science 85* 6(3): 58-65, Apr 85. Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 18, May 6, 1985, p. 16, (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA.)]