

Is Fluoride Best for Children?

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Parents tend to make decisions based on what they're told by their health care providers. So, what should parents do when science starts proving that what they've been told for more than 50 years could be wrong?

What Is Fluoride?

Fluoride is defined as a salt of hydrofluoric acid consisting of two elements. The first element is fluorine, which, in its elemental form, is part of the Earth's crust. This doesn't mean much to a parent unless they understand that Dr. Robert Carton, a former EPA toxicologist, considers fluoride "somewhat less toxic than arsenic and more toxic than lead." Now *that* they understand!

What doesn't make sense about this is that fluoridated water contains an average of 1 mg/liter of fluoride, but the EPA considers any water containing more than .015 mg/liter of either lead or arsenic to be in excess of what is considered "its maximum contaminant level." In other words, fluoridated water would be considered poisonous if it weren't for all the hype around "fluoride." Dr. Carton believes, "Fluoridation is the greatest case of scientific fraud of this century, if not of all time."

Fluoride Sources

Many city and county governments have added fluoride to their water because it's supposed to be good for us; but this isn't the only source. Several items you purchase for your home contain fluoride including toothpaste, grape juice (pesticides), chicken (bone dust released during the separation process), bottled spring water, tea and wine (natural byproducts from the earth).

The Problem With Fluoride

We've all heard that the American Dental Association says fluoride is good for our teeth; the problem is this is a fallacy. Fluoride is not good for our teeth. In fact, it's quite the opposite.

In order for fluoride to bond to teeth, it must remove calcium. That process is called fluorosis. Fluorosis is defined as an abnormal condition caused by excessive intake of fluorides, characterized in children by discoloration and pitting of the teeth, and in adults by pathological bone changes. Not only is fluoride not good for our teeth, but some authorities also believe it's possible many adults suffering from "arthritis" are, in reality, battling fluorosis.

Fluoride Research

In 1988, the National Institute of Dental Research and the United States Public Health Service completed a massive \$3.6 million nationwide survey to determine the efficacy of fluoridation. The data, which was released only after a Freedom of Information Act filing, revealed there was no difference in the amount of tooth decay between fluoridated and nonfluoridated communities. Public health officials in New Zealand and Canada have made similar findings.

In 1999, the New York State Department of Health completed an unprecedented 45-year study comparing children in Newburgh, N.Y., which had fluoridated water for 45 years, with Kingston, N.Y., which never had fluoridated water. It was determined there were no significant differences in the amount of cavities between the two cities. Unfortunately, there was more dental fluorosis in Newburgh.

In 2000, a systematic review of more than 200 water-fluoridation safety and efficacy studies found they were lacking in any real scientific data. One researcher was quoted as saying, "The most serious defect of the studies of possible beneficial effects of water fluoridation was the lack of appropriate design and analysis."

A similar study taken on by the University of California, Davis Department of Mathematics said, "The announced opinions and published papers favoring mechanical fluoridation of public drinking water are especially rich in fallacies, improper design, invalid use of statistical methods, omissions of contrary data, and just plain muddle-headedness and hebetude." In other words, they basically were making it up as they went along.

Finally, according to a 1998 U.S. patent by the pharmaceutical company Sepracor, fluoride activates the very oral "G proteins" that have been determined to lead to chronic gingivitis, periodontal disease and, ultimately, tooth loss.

Fluoride Dangers

The first obvious danger is that fluoride is a poison, but it also is a proven carcinogen. Studies performed by the National Cancer Institute's former Chief Chemist Emeritus, Dr. Dean Burke, show fluoride is responsible for about 10,000 deaths annually. "In point of fact, fluoride causes more human cancer deaths, and causes it faster, than any other chemical."

Similar studies from St. Louis University, Japan's Nippon Dental College and the University of Texas showed fluoride actually increases tumor growth rate, and the New Jersey Department of Health found the risk of osteosarcoma among males under 20 was up to seven times higher in fluoridated areas.

Equally surprising is the fact fluoride has been shown to cause brain damage. In 1999, 1,500 EPA scientists, lawyers and engineers signed a joint resolution to oppose fluoridation because they found fluoride causes "gene mutations, cancer, reproductive effects, neurotoxicity, bone pathology, and ... decreases (of) about 5 to 10 I.Q. points in children aged 8 to 13 years."

What Can Parents Do?

There are several things that can be done to lessen the amount of fluoride children and parents ingest besides simply switching to a nonfluoride toothpaste. The first is to quit drinking from the tap if your community is one of the many with fluoridated water. In addition, be careful when purchasing bottled water, since water-bottling companies are not required to list the amount of fluoride in their water. It's best to purchase only water that says it's purified, distilled, deionized, demineralized or produced through reverse osmosis, as this always will be low in fluoride. It goes without saying to avoid any water that says, "Fortified with fluoride."

It's also important to note the American Dental Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finally have admitted fluoridated water should never be mixed into concentrated formula or foods intended for babies.

As family wellness chiropractors, we are here to provide wellness lifestyle information to parents

so they can make the best decisions for their families. When given the opportunity, provide them with resources - Web sites, research papers and books - to come to their own conclusion as to what is best for their children.

Resources

1. www.icpa4kids.org/research/children/flouride.htm.
2. www.nofish.org/new_page_17.htm.
3. www.icpa4kids.org/research/articles/childhood/Fluoride_More_to_Swallow.htm.
4. www.mercola.com/article/links/fluoride_links.htm.
5. www.fluoridealert.org.

JULY 2008