The Dangers of Fluoride and Fluoridation

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Approximately half of the United States' drinking water supply is fluoridated in an attempt to reduce dental cavities in children. Is this state of affairs justified? Is it safe? Most Americans are unaware of the dangers of ingesting fluoride. Most dentists, physicians and scientists are unaware of the dangers of fluoride and water fluoridation. According to a 1988 article in the prestigious Chemical and Engineering News, scientific voices of opposition to fluoridation have been suppressed, since 1950 when the U.S. Public Health Service first endorsed fluoridation. Power tactics including threats, ridicule and frank censorship aimed at scientists and clinicians knowledgeable about fluoridation have prevented the truth about fluoride to be disseminated to the science world as well as to the public. Whenever a public agency is charged with objectively evaluating the safety of a procedure while at the same time endorsing and recommending it, a serious conflict of interest is set up. This is exactly the position of the U.S. Public Health Service for the past 60 years.

Facts About Fluoride

So, what are some of the facts about fluoride? According to the handbook, Clinical Toxicology of Commercial Products, fluoride is more poisonous than lead and just slightly less poisonous than arsenic. It is a cumulative poison that accumulates in bone over the years. According to the Physicians Desk Reference, "in hypersensitive individuals, fluorides occasionally cause skin eruptions such as atopic dermatitis, eczema, or urticaria. Gastric distress, headache, and weakness have also been reported. These hypersensitive reactions usually disappear promptly after discontinuation of the fluoride."

From 1990 to 1992, the Journal of the American Medical Association published three separate articles linking increased hip fracture rates to fluoride in the water. In the March 22, 1990 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine, Mayo Clinic researchers reported that fluoride treatment of osteoporosis increased hip fracture rate and bone fragility.

A study by Procter and Gamble showed that as little as half the amount of fluoride used to fluoridate public water supplies resulted in a sizable and significant increase in genetic damage. Epidemiology research in the mid-1970's by the late Dr. Dean Burk, head of the cytochemistry division of the National Cancer Institute, indicated that 10,000 or more fluoridation-linked cancer deaths occur yearly in the United States. In 1989, the ability of fluoride to transform normal cells into cancer cells was confirmed by Argonne National Laboratories. Results released in 1989 of
studies carried out at the prestigious Batelle Research Institute showed that fluoride was linked to a rare form of liver cancer in mice, oral tumors and cancers in rats, and bone cancer in male rats. Since 1991, the New Jersey Department of Health found that the incidence of osteosarcoma, a type of bone cancer, was far higher in young men exposed to fluoridated water as compared to those who were not.

In addition to the well documented toxic effects of fluoride, fluoride even at dosages of 1 part per million, found in artificially fluoridated water, can inhibit enzyme systems, damage the immune system, contribute to calcification of soft tissues, worsen arthritis and, of course, cause dental fluorosis in children. These are unsightly white, yellow or brown spots that are found in teeth exposed to fluoride during childhood. In 1993, the Subcommittee on Health Effects of Ingested Fluoride of the National Research Council admitted that 8% to 51% and sometimes up to 80% of the children living in fluoridated areas have dental fluorosis. Malnourished people, particularly children, usually targeted for fluoridation, are at greater risks to experience fluoride's harmful effects.

Surprisingly, the most recent studies do not even show that water fluoridation is effective in reducing tooth decay. In the largest U.S. study of fluoridation and tooth decay, United States Public Health Service dental records of over 39,000 school children, ages 5-17, from 84 areas around the United States showed that the number of decayed, missing, and filled teeth per child was virtually the same in fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas. Dr. John Colquhoun, former Chief Dental Officer of the Department of Health for Auckland, New Zealand, investigated tooth decay statistics from about 60,000 12 to 13 year old children and showed that fluoridation had no significant effect on tooth decay rate.

Given all of this scientific information, what is behind this push for universal fluoridation? Prior to 1945, fluoride was properly regarded as an environmental pollutant. It was responsible for many lawsuits against industries, such as the aluminum industry and the phosphate fertilizer industry, whose waste products contain large quantities of fluoride. This fluoride destroyed crops and animals, leading to the lawsuits. The limited public view was that fluoride was an environmental pollutant that needed to be reduced or eliminated from the environment.

As a result of clever public relations campaigns, fluoride was transformed from an environmental pollutant to an essential nutrient necessary for producing healthy teeth. The science was poor, but the P.R. campaign was great. Being against fluoride was like being against motherhood or apple pie. Industries not only made millions from selling this environmental pollutant to water companies and toothpaste companies, but more importantly, it saved billions of dollars that would be required to clean up this environmental pollutant.

**So, what can you do to protect yourself from fluoride?**

First, avoid fluoridated water. Much of the metropolitan area, including New York City water is artificially fluoridated. Boiling water removes chlorine, but concentrates fluoride. Water filters do not remove fluoride, unless there is a reverse osmosis component. Children should avoid fluoridated vitamins and fluoride treatments at the dentist. Everyone should avoid fluoridated toothpaste. The concentration of fluoride in water is 1 ppm, in toothpaste 1,000 ppm and in fluoride dental rinses 10,000 ppm. Work on your legislators to get fluoride out of the water supplies.

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The Wall Street Journal recently (23 March, 2006) ran an article http://online.wsj.com/article/SB114304623045405305.html reporting on the National Academy of Science's concern about high levels of fluoride in the nation's drinking water, and that the maximum allowed amount "should be lowered."


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Dr. Michael B. Schachter is a magna cum laude graduate of Columbia College, and received his M.D. degree from Columbia's Physicians & Surgeons in 1965. Although originally trained and Board Certified in Psychiatry, he has devoted most of his professional career to treating all kinds of patients, using a complementary and alternative or integrative approach. He is also a Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS), and has achieved Advanced Proficiency in Chelation Therapy from the American College for Advancement in Medicine -- ACAM.

Back in 1974, Dr. Schachter, along with a partner, established one of the first nutritionally oriented orthomolecular, integrative, complementary and holistic practices in the tri-state area, in Nyack, NY. In 1991, the practice was moved to Suffern, NY and became known as the Schachter Center for Complementary Medicine.

Active in a number of professional organizations, Dr. Schachter was past president of the American College for Advancement in Medicine (ACAM) and has been on the ACAM Board of Trustees or an Advisor to the Board since the 1970's. He is also a past president of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Innovative Medicine (FAIM) and has been included in several publications of Marquis Who's Who.

As a recognized leader in orthomolecular psychiatry, nutritional medicine, chelation therapy for cardiovascular disease, and alternative cancer therapies, he is frequently called upon to lecture at conferences and workshops on cardiovascular disease, cancer, and psychiatric conditions.

Co-author of The Food Connection (1979) and Food, Mind and Mood (1980, 1987) and author of The Natural Way to a Healthy Prostate (Keats, 1995), Dr. Schachter was a major contributor to Alternative Medicine's Definitive Guide to Cancer (Future Medicine, 1997). His latest book is What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Depression (Warner, 2006). Several years ago, he wrote the introduction to the book, The Cancer Survivors, by Judith Glassman and his methods and views are discussed in Nancy Bruning's book, Coping with Chemotherapy. A major review paper entitled Integrative Oncology for Clinicians and Cancer Patients was published in the Journal of the International Society of Integrative Medicine in July 2010. Aside from his appearances as a lecturer, Dr. Schachter is often a guest on radio and television, speaking about health and related topics. See our Lectures and Events page for his current schedule.

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