



## The truth about fluoride

*How safe is fluoride for mum, baby and family? DR NOR ASHIKIN MOHKAR writes about the risks from a chemical added to our water*

THE facts: 98 per cent of Europe has abandoned the practice of adding fluoride to water since 2002. Two decades ago, parents in the United States began noticing the word 'poison' on their toothpaste tubes.

The reason: US drug regulators were beginning to doubt the safety of fluoride, particularly to children, and demanded warnings on the labels.

Sodium fluoride (industrial grade hexafluorosilicic acid or soluble fluorosilicate salts or hexafluorosilicic acid fumes) is a man-made chemical that is highly toxic. It is found not only in drinking water, but also in toothpaste as well as in most beverages and processed foods. Since the 1940's, fluoride has been marketed as an excellent water additive to stop tooth decay. Fluoride is now a multi billion-dollar business. To this day there is still no proof that fluoride stops tooth decay and, in fact, after studying 26,000 school children with fluoride exposure in 1992, Professor Emeritus Cornelius Steelink from the University of Arizona found the more fluoride a child takes, the more cavities appear!

Here are some facts that are still unknown to the greater population on sodium fluoride:

It's a hazardous waste by-product of the nuclear, fertilizer and aluminium industries.

It was used by the Nazis to render prisoners more docile.

It was used as an active toxin in rat poison and commercial insecticide (particularly for cockroaches).

It is one of the primary ingredients found in Prozac, Sarin nerve gas, anaesthetic and in hypnotic, psychiatric and anti-depressant drugs, and to some extent in vaccinations.

It was banned by China when it was found to slow down children's learning.

It shortens the human life span by a premature aging process. It has alarmed numerous scientists, dentists and medical professionals after research has shown it causes osteoporosis, bone cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases.

It causes poisoning of the central nervous system especially the hippocampus.

It causes neuropathology and behavioural deficits as stated by Phyllis Mullenix, PhD international authority on toxicology.

It causes dental fluorosis, a discoloration of teeth caused by ingestion of excess fluoride during childhood and which is now reaching near-epidemic proportions in the U.S. and other fluoridated countries.

It causes skeletal fluorosis, a debilitating condition that occurs when fluoride accumulates in bones, making them extremely weak and brittle. In parts of China, India and Turkey where water is naturally high in fluoride, residents tend to age early and die before the age of 50, weak, arthritic and hunched over.

The US Environmental Protection Agency classified fluoride as more toxic than lead but less toxic than arsenic.

The US Akron Regional Poison Centre indicates that a 7-ounce tube of toothpaste contains 199 mg of fluoride, more than enough to kill a 25-pound child.

Our water supply has one part per million (ppm) fluoride. Toothpaste, typically, contains 1,500 ppm.

For decades, anti-fluoride activists have blamed fluoride (which is only slightly less poisonous than arsenic) for a variety of problems, including osteoporosis, bone cancer, kidney problems, arthritis, genetic damage and birth defects, premature aging, lowered intelligence, and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. On Nov 9 2006, this directive was issued by an unlikely source: the American Dental Association (ADA). The question is, does your drinking water contain added fluoride? If so, keep it away from infants under the age of one. At the same time, it is also necessary to warn mothers of using fluoridated water to mix their powdered baby formula.

The ADA issued this advice because babies exposed to fluoridated water are at high risk for developing dental fluorosis – a defect of the teeth which can result in staining and even corrosion of the enamel.

Last October the Food and Drug Administration stated that fluoridated water marketed to infants cannot claim to reduce the risk of cavities.

Dental fluorosis is not the only risk stemming from a baby's exposure to fluoride. In the same week that ADA issued its advisory, an article in the British journal, *The Lancet*, reported that fluoride may damage a child's developing brain. *The Lancet* review described fluoride, along with the rocket fuel additive perchlorate, as an "emerging neurotoxic substance" due to evidence linking fluoride to lower IQs in children, and brain damage in animals.

"Newborn babies have undeveloped brains, and exposure to fluoride, a suspected neurotoxin, should be avoided," notes Hardy Limeback, a member of a 2006 National Research Council panel on fluoride toxicity, and former President of the Canadian Association of Dental Research.

Fluoride is linked with other health problems as well, including weakened bones, reduced thyroid activity, and possibly, bone cancer in boys, according to a recent report from a team of Harvard scientists, the US National Research Council and other recent studies.

Although there are numerous studies suggesting links between fluoride and various illnesses, pro-fluoridationists have always contended - correctly - that the exact effects of long-term fluoridation on our bodies have not been established beyond a shadow of a doubt.

These people haven't done any studies to find out what effect fluoride accumulation will have at current levels. Thus, how can they say it's safe when the studies haven't been done? Right now, we have people who have been ingesting fluoride for 35

years. What happens in another 50 years, when these people have been adding this poison to their bones for 85 years?

Dr Robert Verkerk, executive director of the Alliance for Natural Health said: "Fluorides are extremely reactive molecules which have been shown to cause considerable harm in biological systems. They continue to be used by health authorities for a specific medicinal purpose, namely the treatment and prevention of dental caries, yet they have never been subjected to the full risk/benefit analysis which is required in order to bring other drugs to the market. Drinking water medicated with fluoride clearly amounts to government-sponsored use of an unlicensed drug."

Dr Hardy Limeback (leading Canadian Fluoride Authority) said "almost all the beverages we drink (beer, pop, juice) are made with fluoridated water. Fish and other foods also contain fluoride. Many of the vegetables we eat are fertilized with compounds containing fluoride; they are irrigated with, and washed and cooked in, fluoridated water. So we are getting far more fluoride than it appears."

And, considering safe fluoride levels in terms of concentrations (parts per million) is a dubious practice, since at least half the fluoride we ingest fuses with bones and teeth and never leaves the body.

Therefore, even with a big one-time dose of fluoride, it can kill - as happened to a New York boy during a fluoride treatment and to people in Alaska when too much fluoride was accidentally added to the water – so it is the cumulative effect we should be most worried about.

This is the substance they are putting into our water supply and the things we consume on a daily basis.

Pregnancy is a time when mothers have to be extremely extra careful with the water they drink, the food they eat and the products they use as they may directly or indirectly affect the growth and development of the fetus.

Check the labels for the food you buy, the water you drink or the toothpaste you use for fluoride content. Make sure it is free of flouride. Ensure what is safe for mummy is safe for baby and the family too. ■

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