

Updates on the Fight to End Water Fluoridation

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

✓ Fact Checked

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Paul Connett, executive director of the Fluoride Action Network (FAN), provides promising updates on the historic lawsuit that FAN filed against the U.S. EPA to end water fluoridation
- › The judge hearing the case plans to review two things before making a decision: the National Toxicology Program's (NTP) final review on fluoride's neurotoxicity when it comes out, along with a benchmark dose study (BMD) that was recently published on fluoride's effects on IQ levels
- › This landmark study found that a maternal urine fluoride concentration of 0.2 mg/L, which is exceeded four to five times in pregnant women living in fluoridated communities, was enough to lower IQ in children by one point
- › A Swedish study published in April 2021 found that rates of hip fractures among postmenopausal women were higher in regions with higher levels of fluoride in drinking water
- › The level of evidence that fluoride is neurotoxic now far exceeds the evidence that was in place when lead was banned from gasoline
- › If you're concerned about the health effects of fluoride, please support FAN with your tax-deductible donation today; Mercola.com will match your donation, dollar for dollar, up to \$25,000, during Fluoride Awareness Week

It's Fluoride Awareness Week here at Mercola.com, and I spoke with Paul Connett, executive director of the Fluoride Action Network (FAN), for the occasion. Connett has been instrumental in catalyzing the movement to remove fluoride — which is neurotoxic — from water supplies in the U.S. as well as internationally, and he shared some exciting updates that have us moving closer to a post-water-fluoridation world.

First up is an update to the historic lawsuit that FAN filed against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in federal court. In 2016, FAN and coalition partners filed a petition asking the EPA to ban the deliberate addition of fluoridating chemicals to U.S. drinking water under Section 21 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

The EPA dismissed FAN's petition, prompting FAN's [lawsuit challenging the EPA's denial](#). Although the EPA filed a motion to dismiss the case, the motion was denied by the court in 2017.¹ The trial was held in June 2020, and while the judge has yet to make a final ruling,² it's moving in a positive direction.

"We had a recent hearing in which the judge denied the latest effort by the EPA to get the case dropped," Connett said in our interview. "He's ruled in our favor several times now on key decisions. What he made clear is he's very interested in the science of this issue. He wants to wait before he makes his ruling."

Judge Plans to Review New Fluoride Study Showing IQ Reduction

The judge hearing the case plans to review two things before making a decision: the National Toxicology Program's (NTP) final review on fluoride's neurotoxicity when it comes out, along with a benchmark dose study (BMD) study that was recently published on fluoride's effects on IQ levels.

"So, half of what the judge wants to see has come out," Connett said. Dr. Philippe Grandjean, an internationally known expert in environmental epidemiology, with ties to both Harvard School of Public Health and the University of Southern Denmark, is the EPA's go-to person on mercury's neurotoxicity³ and he has warned about the risks of exposing children to neurotoxicants during early life and in utero.

Grandjean and colleagues just published a landmark study showing that exposure to very low levels of fluoride during pregnancy impairs the brain development of the child.⁴ The study found that a maternal urine fluoride concentration of 0.2 mg/L, which is exceeded four to five times in pregnant women living in fluoridated communities, was enough to lower IQ by one point.

Not only do the findings suggest that water-fluoride recommendations meant to protect pregnant women and children should be revised,⁵ but they show that there's significant risk even at current fluoridation levels. Connett said:

"What they found, they would predict a lowering of IQ in children if the pregnant mother's urine was at 0.2 milligrams per liter ... To put that into perspective, the average in north California and in Canada, two studies, is between 0.8 and one part per million. So in other words ... four to five times more.

So you could predict (because this is a linear relationship), the average loss of IQ for children born in the United States, if their mother drinks fluoridated tap water, is going to be between four and five points, and that's massive when you look at the impact on a whole population. Massive."

As Stuart Cooper, FAN's campaign director, [previously stated](#), "It has been well established that a loss of one IQ point leads to a reduced lifetime earning ability of \$18,000. Summed over the whole population we are talking about a loss of billions of dollars of earning ability each year."

The trial is moving along in a positive direction, but they're not out of the woods yet. Connett noted that there is evidence from confidential sources that pressure has been put upon the NTP, so there is concern that their findings could be whitewashed. "Once again, we might be confronted with the best science being nullified by political interference," he said.

Expert Research Highlights Fluoride's Dangers to Children

One of the experts who testified during the trial was Dr. Bruce Lanphear, who is known as “the EPA's ‘go-to man’ on lead's neurotoxicity, and his work shaped their lead standards.”⁶ Lanphear’s JAMA Pediatrics study, published in 2019, found that every 1 mg/L increase in fluoride in Canadian pregnant women’s urine was linked to a 4.5-point decrease in IQ in their male children.⁷

The study is one of several NIH-funded studies⁸ that Connett believes will be key to the case. “Fabulous methodology, the best methodology to date,” Connett said. Other NIH-funded studies include:

- In a study of 213 Mexican mother-child pairs, higher levels of fluoride exposure during pregnancy were associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)⁹
- Babies fed formula mixed with fluoridated water had IQs that were lower than babies fed formula mixed with nonfluoridated water, and researchers noted, “Consumption of formula reconstituted with fluoridated water can lead to excessive fluoride intake.”¹⁰

According to Connett, “So the only difference was whether these children got fluoridated tap water in their formula when they were babies. A staggering 13 IQ points dropped, staggering.”

- In a study of 299 mother-child pairs in Mexico, higher prenatal exposure to fluoride, in the range of exposure levels reported for pregnant women in other areas, was associated with lower cognitive function in the children at ages 4 and 6 to 12 years.¹¹

The collective exposure of children to **fluoride in drinking water** is a major public health threat. Going back to Grandjean’s study showing that even very low exposures to fluoride in utero are toxic, Connett explained:

“He [Grandjean] said, right now the damage to children's brains in the United States is probably greater for fluoride than it is for lead, arsenic and mercury.

Now he's not saying that atom for atom fluoride is more toxic than lead, mercury or arsenic ...

He's just saying, if you look at what's happening today, fluoride is doing more damage to our kids' brains than these other well-known neurotoxic substances, lead, mercury and arsenic. The reason of course is the exposure. There are millions of children that are being exposed to fluoridated tap water on a daily basis. Millions of pregnant women."

Damaging People From 'Womb to Tomb'

It's not only children who are at risk from fluoride's adverse effects. A Swedish study published in April 2021 found that rates of hip fractures among postmenopausal women were higher in regions with higher levels of fluoride in drinking water.¹²

In this case, the fluoride was naturally occurring in the water at concentrations at or below 1 mg/L, making their total exposures similar to those of women living in regions with artificial water fluoridation. While rates of all types of bone fractures were elevated in areas with higher fluoride in drinking water, the link to hip fractures was particularly strong. Connett said:

"So they worked out their individual exposure to fluoride and, low and behold, they found that postmenopausal women drinking the same range of fluoride concentration that we have in fluoridated communities in the United States had a 50% increased prevalence of hip fracture.

As you know, hip fracture is very serious. We have about 300,000 hip fractures in the elderly in the United States and 30% of those women who get those hip fractures are dead within a year. Many of them do not regain an independent existence ...

Hip fractures are a very serious issue for elderly people. So we may be damaging people from womb to tomb. Damaging the fetus and then damaging

our bones over a lifetime, which has fatal consequences when you reach old age."

FAN Catches Head of CDC's Oral Health Division in a Lie

The CDC's Division of Oral Health is still actively promoting water fluoridation, and the CDC just recently gave a large grant to Mississippi to do so, Connett said. "Now let me explain who they are," he said, referring to the Division of Oral Health:

"There's only about 30 people who are interested in teeth, and they're nearly all dentally trained, and they work hand in hand with the ADA [American Dental Association]. So they're a self-fulfilling prophecy in terms of supporting fluoridation, and they heavily influence local decisions. So, although the federal government doesn't accept responsibility for it, they're encouraging communities to do it ...

This Oral Health Division has worldwide influence. There's not a day that goes by that somebody, some doctor, some dentist, some public health official, some politician says that fluoridation is one of the top public health achievements of the 20th century. So enormous influence, but no responsibility for harm."

CDC's Oral Health Division is primarily made up of those trained in dentistry — not specialists looking at the effects of fluoride on the brain and body. "Let's have a group at the CDC that promotes fluoridation based upon what they think it does for teeth, and let's have another group of people that, regardless of promotion, is looking very carefully at all the evidence which indicates harm to the bone, to the brains and so on," Connett said.

FAN also caught Casey Hannon, director of the CDC's Division of Oral Health in a lie. According to Connett, "He said, 'These NIH-funded studies were done at levels much higher than the water fluoridation programs.' Absolute nonsense. They were done either at doses equivalent to what people in fluoridated communities get, or they were actually done in fluoridated communities themselves."

This prompted FAN and over 100 professionals to write a letter to the new CDC director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky. “We weren't after punishment of Casey Hannon, the head of the Oral Health Division. We were after a change of policy. He's only doing what all the previous heads of the Oral Health Division have done, which is to promote fluoridation as being safe and effective, safe and effective, safe and effective.”

FAN is hopeful that with a new person in the position, being informed about the latest fluoridation/IQ studies, positive changes will continue. Already, they've gotten a response from Dr. Karen Hacker, the director of CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

“The important point for us is that we've now got engagement at the CDC above the Oral Health Division. We don't get these platitudes about how wonderful it [fluoridation] is for teeth,” Connett said.

Help End the Practice of Water Fluoridation

The level of evidence that [fluoride is neurotoxic](#) now far exceeds the evidence that was in place when lead was banned from gasoline.

“Fluoride is following the same trajectory as lead,” Connett said, “because basically, whether or not you found a neurotoxic effect for lead was simply a function of how well designed your study was. The better your study was designed, the more likely you were to find that lead was lowering IQ. The same thing is happening with fluoride.”

If you're concerned about the [health effects of fluoride](#), please support FAN with your tax-deductible donation today. [Mercola.com](#) will match your donation, dollar for dollar, up to \$25,000, during Fluoride Awareness Week.

How will FAN use the funds? They're expecting a mini trial to come up soon, and they'll need to provide expert witnesses to give commentary on the final version of the NTP report and the BMD analysis. They're also revamping their website, [FluorideAlert.org](#), to make it easier for people to use and access information (especially for those who do so via cell phone).

“We have the largest health database in the world, bigger than many governments, maybe all governments, on the health effects of fluoride. We want to make that more accessible,” Connett said. FAN also uses funding to help communities end water fluoridation or keep it out of their cities:

“Right now, Spokane [Washington] is trying to keep fluoridation out, I think for the fourth time. Calgary is trying to put it back in ... They're claiming that tooth decay has gone up dramatically in Calgary since they stopped fluoridation, and that's simply not true.

... our mission is to get this information to as many people as possible, so with their help we can take this information to the power structures. We're doing it in federal court and we're doing it with our website. Right now, we're doing it by engaging with people at the CDC above its Oral Health Division.”

On a practical level, if you live in an area with fluoridated water, you can protect your health by filtering your water. While Connett travels to a natural spring to collect pure water every few weeks — the ideal solution — this won't be possible for many people.

Because fluoride is a very small molecule, it's difficult to filter out once added to your water supply, but reverse osmosis filtration is effective for fluoride removal.

The simplest, most effective and most cost-effective strategy is to not put fluoride in the water to begin with, but while we work to end water fluoridation, you do not want to expose yourself or your family to fluoride, so be sure to find a fluoride-free source of pure drinking water.

Sources and References

- ¹ [Fluoride Action Network, Trial Fact Sheet](#)
- ² [Fluoride Action Network, TSCA Trial](#)
- ³ [Fluoride Action Network, The TSCA Trial, Day 3, June 11, 2020](#)
- ^{4, 5} [Fluoride Action Network June 8, 2021](#)
- ⁶ [Earth Justice July 2, 2018](#)
- ⁷ [JAMA Pediatrics August 19, 2019](#)
- ⁸ [Fluoride Action Network, Appendix C, The NIH-Funded Studies](#)

- ⁹ Environ Int. 2018 Dec;121(Pt 1):658-666. doi: 10.1016/j.envint.2018.09.017. Epub 2018 Oct 10
- ¹⁰ Environment International January 2020, Volume 134
- ¹¹ Environ Health Perspect. 2017 Sep 19;125(9):097017. doi: 10.1289/EHP655
- ¹² Environmental Health Perspectives April 6, 2021