

# Fluoride: Poison on Tap

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

February 23, 2024

## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Since 1945, it has been widely accepted in the U.S. that fluoride is “safe and effective” to prevent tooth decay, but many health experts and scientists disagree
- › Rates of dental fluorosis among children and adolescents has spiked in recent years and, if fluoridated water is used, formula-fed infants are at particular risk for fluorosis even before their teeth are fully formed
- › The Fluoride Action Network has brought a lawsuit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency seeking to ban the deliberate addition of fluoride to American water supplies

***Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published October 14, 2017.***

Today, 74% of Americans on community water systems receive fluoridated water.<sup>1</sup> Since 1945, it has been widely accepted in the U.S. that fluoride is "safe and effective" to prevent tooth decay. But is it really?

The 2015 documentary, "Fluoride: Poison on Tap," seeks to expose what may be one of the longest-running and most successful deceptions known to mankind – adding industrial waste, in the form of fluoride, to public drinking water. You may be shocked at the lengths to which corporations, industry and government have gone to make this industrial waste product appear beneficial to your health.

**Fluoride = Health: How Did We Get Here?**

You may be surprised to know the first American commercial use of fluoride, in the form of sodium fluoride, was to kill insects, lice, mice and other vermin. It was quite effective.

In the 1930s, aluminum industry giant Alcoa was the largest producer of fluoride, releasing vapors into the atmosphere that crippled or killed farm animals and scorched crops and other vegetation. In those early years, many lawsuits were brought against Alcoa to recover damages from lost animals and crops.

Growing concerns about the seemingly negative effects of fluoride gas on human beings motivated the company to devise a means of recycling this potent industrial byproduct. The brainchild of water fluoridation was Gerald Cox, a researcher with the Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh. He received a request to look at fluoride's effects on teeth from Alcoa lab director Francis Frary, who was concerned about mounting lawsuits related to the fluoride pollution his plant produced.

Another motivation was the reality that disposing of fluoride waste from its aluminum plants was becoming increasingly costly for Alcoa. Previously, the Mellon Institute had been the leading defender of the asbestos industry, producing research showing asbestos was harmless and worker health problems were purportedly due to other causes. Using "science" as a smokescreen, the Mellon Institute was able to save the asbestos industry from financial catastrophe.

As a result of their success in using science to prop up the asbestos industry at that time, it makes sense Alcoa chose Cox and the Mellon Institute to craft a story around the perceived health benefits of fluoride. To ensure their success, Alcoa executives realized public opinion about fluoride had to be carefully and continuously manipulated.

In a bold move, they hired public relations pioneer Edward Bernays, who later became known as the "father of spin," to head the U.S. water fluoridation campaign. Using psychological principles targeted at what he called, the "mass mind," Bernays was quite successful in attracting public support for the widespread consumer use of fluoride.<sup>2</sup>

## **The Beginning of Water Fluoridation**

By the 1950s and '60s, when the practice of releasing fluoride vapors into the air was reined in due to the introduction of air pollution technology, fluoride had already been added to U.S. drinking water. In January 1945, the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, became the first of thousands of U.S. municipalities to proudly add fluoride to its community water source, under the guise of preventing tooth decay.

As technology has advanced, fluoride acid, also known as hydrofluorosilicic acid, is now caught in wet scrubbers, which curtails air emissions. As such, companies like Cargill, Mosaic and Penco are able to barrel up and sell fluoride to cities across the U.S. which, in turn, add this unrefined hazardous material to their community water supplies.<sup>3</sup> You may be shocked to learn that the fluoride added to your water is not pharmaceutical grade.

Indeed, most of the fluoride added to municipal drinking water is simply an unrefined, highly toxic, industrial waste product. Some of the contaminants that accompany the fluoride added to your drinking water likely include aluminum, arsenic, lead and radionucleotide, among others.

As noted in the film, water fluoridation was invented as a profitable recycling venue for toxic waste. Instead of having to pay for proper disposal, this industrial waste is sold for profit, and "disposed of" by being dispersed into drinking water.

## **Fluoride May Be in More Than Just Your Drinking Water**

Should you be fortunate to live far from industrial plants where fluoride is handled and lucky enough to reside in a community where fluoride has not been added to your water, you may still get dosed with fluoride. How? Because it's in beverages and processed foods such as cereal, beer, juice and soda. In fact, anything manufactured with fluoridated water will add to your body's fluoride toxicity burden.

According to the late Jeff Green, former national director of Citizens for Safe Drinking Water, fluoride can also be found in selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI)

medications, such as the antidepressant Prozac. Additionally, it appeared in the banned diet drug Fen-Phen. Rohypnol, the so-called date-rape drug, also contains fluoride.

Green noted the teenagers responsible for the shootings at Columbine High School, in Littleton, Colorado, in 1999 were using SSRI drugs at the time, which he suspects may have impacted their mood and behavior. If you live in the U.S., nearly 95% of all toothpaste sold in this country also contains fluoride. Increasingly, dentists are adding fluoride to their cement and filling materials, and fluoride-containing varnishes are often added to children's teeth.

## **Common Misconceptions About Water Fluoridation**

It's a common misconception that fluoride is added to drinking water worldwide. Nothing could be further from the truth. Says Paul Connett, Ph.D., retired chemistry professor and executive director of the Fluoride Action Network (FAN):<sup>4</sup>

*"Water fluoridation is a peculiarly American phenomenon. It started at a time when asbestos lined our pipes, lead was added to gasoline, PCBs filled our transformers, and DDT was deemed so 'safe and effective' that officials felt no qualms spraying kids in school classrooms and seated at picnic tables. One by one all of those chemicals have been banned, but fluoridation remains untouched."*

As stated by Connett, the U.S. is one of just eight countries worldwide in which more than half of its population is exposed to fluoride through their drinking water. The other seven countries that fluoridate drinking water are Australia, Colombia, Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand.

Water fluoridation has actually been banned in most European countries, including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, just to name a few. According to biological dentist Dr. James Rota, these countries, as well as China and Japan, have concluded the practice of adding fluoride to

drinking water is "ineffective, toxic and should not be used." FAN underscores the limited scope and value of adding fluoride to drinking water, noting:<sup>5</sup>

- Nearly 378 million people, representing just 5% of the world's population, drink artificially fluoridated water
- More people drink fluoridated water in the U.S. than in the rest of the world combined
- Western nations that fluoridate their water have rates of tooth decay similar to those that do not add fluoride to their water<sup>6</sup>

## **The Effects of Fluoride on Your Body**

Given that fluoride is handled as a hazardous material and labeled accordingly, the lack of transparency about its health effects is a true public health travesty. According to Rota, several of the scientifically proven health effects of fluoride are already known. He asserts fluoride has been shown to:

- Accelerate the aging process
- Cause genetic damage
- Contribute to arthritis and joint pain
- Increase the incidence of cancer and tumor growth
- Interrupt DNA repair

With respect to fluoride's presumed link to arthritis and joint pain, Connett stated:

*"The first sign fluoride has poisoned your bones is that you have pain in your joints, stiffness in your joints and pain in your bones ... And the doctor will simply tell you that you have joint pain ..."*

*We have millions of people in the U.S. and in other fluoridated countries who have joint pain – 1 in 3 adults on average. But nobody's ever conclusively*

*looked to see if these arthritis cases have particularly been caused by or exacerbated by fluoride. They just don't want to look."*

The spike in the number of cases of hypothyroidism in the U.S. has also been loosely linked to fluoride. FAN noted that studies investigating fluoride's impact on thyroid hormone levels support the belief that fluoride has an "antithyroid" effect under certain circumstances.<sup>7</sup>

Particularly in instances where your iodine levels are low, fluoride will likely have a greater negative impact on your thyroid. About the probable link between fluoride and hypothyroidism, Dr. Spyros Mezitis, endocrinologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, said:

*"Clinicians ... should emphasize to patients this association and should test patients for underactive thyroid. Patients should probably be advised to drink less fluoridated water and consume less fluoridated products, including toothpaste. ... [S]tudies have also shown that iodine deficiency, that may be caused by extra ingestion of fluoride, is related to hypothyroidism."*

## **Fluorosis: Are Your Children Affected?**

Research<sup>8</sup> presented at the 2017 National Oral Health Conference highlighted the reality that increasingly more young people between the ages of 6 and 19 suffer from dental fluorosis. Data from 2011 to 2012 indicate that 57% of youth are affected by fluorosis, while according to recorded data, just 37% were impacted from 1999 to 2004.

Fluorosis results when tooth enamel becomes progressively weakened and discolored. It is often characterized by white spots and yellow or brown discoloration. About fluorosis, FAN states:<sup>9</sup>

*"Fluorosis is a defect of tooth enamel caused by too much fluoride intake during the first eight years of life. Although fluorosis can be cosmetically treated, the damage to the enamel is permanent. Common causes of fluorosis include: fluoridated drinking water (particularly during infancy), ingestion of fluoride*

*toothpaste, use of fluoride tablets and consumption of processed foods made with fluoridated water."*

Often, dentists and public health officials brush off fluorosis as a purely aesthetic issue, one they believe is a worthy trade-off for the supposed benefits of fluoride. In reality, fluorosis is an outward sign that fluoride is damaging not only your teeth, but also most certainly, to some degree, the rest of your body.

## **Caution: Fluoride Is Extremely Harmful for Infants**

Fluorosis is also a huge concern for infants because it is a condition that can progress well before your baby's teeth are visible. Instances of children developing fluorosis due to the consumption of fluoridated "nursery water" are well documented. Breast-feeding is the ideal choice for your baby for many reasons, one of which is that it contains very little, if any, fluoride.

This is by design because infants are extremely vulnerable to neurotoxins. If, however, breast-feeding is not an option for you, and you must use formula, be sure to prepare it using non-fluoridated water. In the book, "The Case Against Fluoride," Connett explains:

*"In the view of many critics of fluoridation ... it is reckless to expose infants to levels of fluoride in orders of magnitude higher than that found in breast milk. In the U.S., infants who are fed formula reconstituted with fluoridated tap water receive the highest levels of fluoride (per kilogram bodyweight) in the human population.*

*Specifically, infants who are fed formula made with fluoridated water at the current level of 1 part-per-million fluoride will receive a dose up to 250 times more than the breastfed infant."*

## **The Bottom Line About Fluoride in Your Drinking Water**

In their closing remarks, some of the experts featured in the documentary did not mince words about their dislike and distrust of fluoridated water. As noted by Connett:

*"Once you put a medicine in the drinking water, you can't control the dose because you can't control how much water people drink. You can't control who gets it because it goes to everybody. If you ask your pharmacist if there's any drug in his store that is safe enough to give to everyone – young people, old people, sick people, well people – at any dose, he'd laugh at you."*

Said Phyllis Mullenix, Ph.D., a pharmacologist and toxicologist: "There is absolutely no drug on the market that is given as 'one dose fits all.'" In his earlier writings, Connett shared five reasons he believes fluoridation of community water systems is unethical:<sup>10</sup>

1. It violates your right to informed consent to medication
2. The municipality cannot control the dose of fluoride you personally receive
3. The municipality cannot track the effects of fluoride on you individually
4. It ignores the fact that some people are more vulnerable to fluoride's toxic effects than others; you may suffer while others may benefit from its addition to the water supply
5. It violates the Nuremberg code for human experimentation

## **It's Easy to Safeguard Your Oral Health Without Fluoride**

When it comes to good oral hygiene and preventing cavities, drinking fluoridated water and brushing your teeth with toxic toothpaste, which contains fluoride, is definitely not the answer. Your toothbrush and natural fluoride-free toothpaste are important, but don't be misled by thinking they're the only options for dental health.

Many natural substances, such as the foods you eat, also have the power to drastically improve not only the health of your teeth and gums, but the rest of your body too. The key to maintaining or improving your oral health hinges on the attention you give to your diet and proper dental care. Areas you may want to consider include:



Eating raw, organic foods

---

Avoiding sugary foods and processed foods, many of which contain fluoride

---

Brushing and flossing your teeth daily, ideally twice a day

---

Rinsing your mouth after meals and, at night, with a solution of baking soda and water to alkalize the pH in your mouth

---

Oil pulling with [coconut oil](#), which reduces bacterial growth in your mouth, strengthens your teeth, reduces inflammation in your gums and naturally whitens your teeth

---

Receiving regular dental checkups, ideally from a mercury-free, biological dentist

---

## **Landmark Lawsuit Against EPA Seeks to End Fluoridation in US**

FAN, along with a coalition of environmental and public health groups, has filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This landmark lawsuit is something many of us have anticipated for decades! It comes in response to the EPA's denial of a petition under Section 21 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) that seeks a ban on water fluoridation.

In November 2016, a coalition including FAN, American Academy of Environmental Medicine, Food & Water Watch, International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology, Moms Against Fluoridation and the Organic Consumers Association, among others, petitioned the EPA to ban the deliberate addition of fluoridating chemicals to American drinking water under the provisions of TSCA.

The petition, which included more than 2,500 pages of scientific documentation detailing the risks of water fluoridation to human and animal health, was denied in

February 2017. At that time, Michael Connett, an attorney with FAN and author of the petition, issued the following statement:

*"Unfortunately, the EPA's decision to deny our petition demonstrates that the Agency is not yet prepared to let go of the outdated assumptions it has long held about fluoride ... We believe that an impartial judge reviewing this evidence will agree that fluoridation poses an unreasonable risk."*

Because the TSCA statute provides an opportunity for citizens to challenge an EPA denial in federal court, FAN is now suing the agency as a means of obtaining an independent legal review of the evidence. Stay tuned for further developments! For now, you can help the coalition continue its momentum by supporting the efforts of FAN, and by joining or initiating a local campaign to end water fluoridation.

**DONATE TODAY**

## Sources and References

---

- <sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention July 2016
- <sup>2</sup> Duluth Reader April 27, 2017
- <sup>3</sup> Fluoride Action Network May 2003
- <sup>4, 10</sup> Fluoride Action Network November 28, 2002
- <sup>5</sup> Fluoride Action Network April 7, 2021
- <sup>6</sup> Fluoride Action Network, Tooth Decay in F vs NF Countries
- <sup>7</sup> Fluoride Action Network, Thyroid
- <sup>8</sup> Boston University Libraries 2016
- <sup>9</sup> Fluoride Action Network, Dental Fluorosis