

Why many medical professionals are opposing water fluoridation

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As a practicing Portland dentist and one who has enjoyed reading and supporting Street Roots for years, it was very disappointing to read the Street Roots article and editorial regarding water fluoridation. This is especially true since Street Roots did not even contact any of the doctors, nurses, chiropractors, acupuncturists, pharmacists, mid-wives and other medical professionals that are actively working with Clean Water Portland to protect Portlanders from the risks of adding fluoridation chemicals to our drinking water. In just a few weeks Portlanders will receive their ballots in this special election that will decide the future of our drinking water for decades to come.

From the Sierra Club's Columbia Group and the Oregon Acupuncture Association to EPA's Scientists' Union and Food & Water Watch, major health, conservation and consumer groups are opposing fluoridation because of the well-documented risks and the fact that there are much more effective alternatives, such as increasing access to care, that we should pursue with the millions of dollars in increased water rates it would cost to add fluoridation chemicals to our water.

Fluoridation may sound good if you only hear half the story, but its health effects are real and would fall most heavily on sensitive sub-populations with diseases common among the homeless such as diabetes, kidney disease and thyroid disorders. There is a reason your fluoridated toothpaste tube says, "Do Not Swallow," and the reason is that even the FDA is well aware of the real risks from fluoride ingestion.

While fluoridation is well-intentioned, most promoters cannot tell you the name of the chemical that would actually be used to "fluoridate" our water and have little idea of where it comes from or scientifically

reported risks. These facts are worth knowing before you get your ballot this May. Fluoridation chemicals are industrial byproducts from fertilizer production... Really

The idea that we would knowingly add an industrial byproduct from fertilizer production to some of the best drinking water in the world seems unbelievable. But it does not take more than a little time at a local library or a few minutes on-line to read page 15 of the National Academy of Sciences "Fluoride in Drinking Water" report to see for yourself that fluoridation means adding "byproducts from the manufacture of phosphate fertilizer" to our water.

The Portland Water Bureau admits fluoridation would mean adding the chemical fluorosilicic acid (FSA) to our drinking water. FSA is not a mineral like calcium fluoride. FSA is not even pharmaceutical grade fluoride like what is found in toothpaste. Instead, FSA comes in chemical tanker trucks and is so corrosive and acidic the Water Bureau has admitted it would also have to add a caustic neutralizer to our water to minimize the amount of lead FSA would leach from our water pipes. Even the lead fluoridation promoters don't dispute that the FSA is an industrial byproduct that contains known toxics such as arsenic, lead, and even mercury, they just claim that the levels of these toxics are too low to matter.

But for me and many other medical professionals the idea of adding more chemicals and more toxic contaminants to the water Portlanders and our kids drink does not make sense.

The recent science supports there are reasonable risks from fluoridation chemicals.

Recent scientific studies from the National Academy of Sciences, top researchers from Harvard School of Public

Health and others have now documented a spectrum of risks related to fluoridation ranging from neurological impacts on childhood IQ and excessive fluoride exposure in infants using fluoridated infant formula, to increased risks of bone cancer in boys.

Fluoridation promoters dismiss the hundreds of scientific studies showing serious risks related to very low concentration fluoride exposure. They even claim the National Academy of Sciences report titled "Fluoride in Drinking Water" is "irrelevant" to water fluoridation despite the fact it was this report that triggered the federal government in 2011 to call for a 40 percent reduction in maximum level of fluoridation chemicals that can be added to drinking water. This same report, lead to widespread warnings by federal and state health authorities against the regular use of fluoridated water to mix infant formula due to the threat of excessive fluoride exposure.

As the National Academy of Sciences reported:

"it is apparent that fluorides have the ability to interfere with the functions of the brain.... (p. 222).

"Fluoride appears to have the potential to initiate or promote cancers..." (p. 336).

"The possible association of cytogenetic effects with fluoride exposure suggests that Down's syndrome is a biologically plausible outcome of exposure." (p. 197).

"There is no question that fluoride can affect the cells involved in providing immune responses." (p. 295).

Claims that fluoridation chemicals are so safe every Portlander and their kids should have to drink them regardless of whether they choose are not scientifically supported.

This is why 97percent of Western Europe is un-fluoridated and why Portland should vote this May to remain free of fluoridation chemicals.



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