

Fluoride Referendum

A referendum on whether fluoride should be added to public water supplies in the Waitaki District is being held as part of the local body elections in October. Information outlining the proposal will be included with the voting documents, which will be posted to electors during 21 – 26 September, or can be found on council's website.

Waitaki District Council does not express a view on fluoridation and has invited the parties representing the opposing views to supply an article of up to one page each to provide information for and against fluoridation. The articles are included here. It is emphasised that these views represent the opinions of the parties campaigning for and against the issue and should not be taken as reflecting Council's position.

The case **AGAINST** adding fluoride to public water supplies

- The Government privately admits there is legitimate scientific controversy over whether fluoridation is either safe or effective (6 May 2003), despite publicly claiming 60 years of allegedly reliable research.
- The York Review (2000) found no reliable population study research in the entire 60 year history of fluoridation. It found no evidence that fluoridation promotes social equity, or that it is safe. It also found that the study results on tooth decay ranged from a small benefit (about ½ a filling) to a small harm from fluoridation. It concluded that there was legitimate scientific controversy on fluoridation.
- The US National Research Council (NRC), the highest scientific body in the USA, recently published its 3 year study of water fluoridation. It found evidence of harm at levels below that of fluoridated water – and could find no safe level of fluoride. The review identified groups at high risk from fluoridation such as: kidney patients, diabetics, infants, and the elderly. Earlier studies show that approx 1-5% of people are allergic or hypersensitive to fluoride. Three members of the NRC panel have signed the petition (see below) calling for an end to fluoridation.
- In August 2007 over 600 scientists, doctors, dentists and professionals petitioned for an international ban on fluoridation, and just like the tobacco companies, for the US fluoridation promoters (ADA and CDC) to provide on oath before the US Congress scientific evidence supporting their claims – claims repeated in NZ. They are supported by the US Lillie Center, which recently filed ethics charges against the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for failing to warn high risk groups of the dangers of fluoridation.
- Infants under 1 year should not be given fluoridated water, nor should fluoridated water be used to make up infant formula. This warning has recently been stated by both the CDC and the American Dental Assn (ADA). The NZ standard for infant formula (2.9.1) also warns not to give infants (under 1 year) fluoridated water or to make up infant formula with it.
- Boys aged 6 – 10 have a 700% greater risk of teenage bone cancer if they drink fluoridated water. All age-related studies show this. The latest, the Bassin study published in 2006, provides evidence beyond reasonable doubt. Promoters quote irrelevant studies to hide this fact from the public.
- Lifetime exposure to fluoride causes increased arthritis or mild skeletal fluorosis (with the same symptoms) – exactly what we have seen in NZ and other fluoridated countries. In the USA arthritis has now reached epidemic proportions.
- Fluoride toothpastes may benefit teeth by strengthening the tooth surface, but fluoridated water provides no permanent benefit (Armfield and Spencer, Australia 2004, refuting the seriously flawed "Wellington – Canterbury" study). Fluoridated water is too low in fluoride to affect the tooth surface (1 NZ and 4 international studies).
- Fluoridation shows no benefit in the South Island. The 2004 official Government statistics reveal that the decay rate for South Island 12 year olds (decayed, missing, filled teeth) is 1.79 in fluoridated areas, but only 1.65 in non-fluoridated areas. After 50 year of fluoridation Hastings still has more tooth decay than unfluoridated Napier.
- Dental health in Timaru has dramatically improved since it ceased fluoridation in 1985. Timaru 12 year-olds now have less decay than for any fluoridated area of the South Island.
- Almost the whole of Continental Europe has rejected water fluoridation as being either ineffective or too dangerous. The improvement in dental health has occurred in all countries, regardless of fluoridation status.
- The "fluoride" used in water fluoridation is silico-fluoride derived as a toxic waste product from fertiliser manufacturing, and 80 times more toxic than naturally occurring calcium fluoride. These silico-fluorides are contaminated with mercury, arsenic and lead and have never been tested for human health safety (confirmed by the US Environmental Protection Association). They are proven to have different effects from calcium fluoride.
- While many reputable and well meaning people and organisations continue to promote fluoridation, they have simply accepted without question the claims of promoters - that science is now exposing as false. Misinformed well-intentioned support is no substitute for sound science.

Information provided by Fluoride Action Network NZ Inc. – one of NZ's voluntary organisations promoting your health by working to remove toxins from the food chain and environment. See www.fannz.org.nz.