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***FAN media alert:***

## **Is America being over-exposed to fluoride?**

**National Research Council  
report on toxicity of fluoride  
to be released March 22**



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A long awaited report from the National Research Council on the toxicology of fluoride will be released on Wednesday, March 22. This report has reviewed the past 13 years of scientific research in the field. It was commissioned by the US EPA to review the safe drinking water standard for fluoride in light of recent scientific findings. The outcome of the review may have important implications for water fluoridation policy in the US. Many cities and states that have been considering starting or halting fluoridation are looking to this report for help with their decision. The report also has implications for those communities with naturally high fluoride levels in water and for people with fluoride exposure from multiple sources, including processed foods, pesticide residues, and dental products.

Of particular interest will be the panel's conclusions on recent scientific studies which have found increased rates of childhood bone cancer among Americans drinking fluoridated water.

Journalists may register to receive updates and request an advance copy of the report by contacting the National Academies of Science press office:

Bill Kearney, NAS Director of Media Relations  
202-334-2138; [wkearney@nas.edu](mailto:wkearney@nas.edu)

A press conference will be held 11 a.m. March 22 in Room 150 of the National Academies building, 2100 C St., N.W., Washington, D.C. Reporters who cannot attend may listen to a live audio webcast of the briefing and submit questions using an e-mail form at:

<http://national-academies.org>

Report web page:

<http://www8.nationalacademies.org/cp/projectview.aspx?key=36>

The Fluoride Action Network (FAN) is the leading science and advocacy group focused on health issues surrounding fluoride from water, food, air, pesticides, and industrial exposures. FAN's director was an invited presenter at the initial meeting of the NRC panel. FAN submitted extensive scientific information to the panel.

Included below are some key questions regarding the report.

We have also produced extensive background documents on the issues which are available on our website at: <http://www.FluorideAction.net>

Journalists wishing to contact FAN representatives may reach us at:

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## Key questions:

1. **Evidence of harm-** Does this report find credible evidence for any adverse health effects for people drinking water at or below the current EPA drinking water regulation of 4 ppm fluoride?
2. **Bone cancer-** What does this report conclude about the new evidence that young boys drinking fluoridated water have an increased risk of osteosarcoma, a frequently fatal bone cancer? (Bassin 2001 at Harvard)
3. **Harvard cancer studies-** Did the committee obtain adequate access to the Harvard studies on bone cancer? If not, was there any concern that these studies may have been suppressed? They were begun more than 10 years ago and the findings that sparked controversy (Bassin 2001) were completed 5 years ago.
4. **1 ppm safe for everyone?** The US Public Health Department and the American Dental Association (ADA) have maintained since the beginning of fluoridation in 1950 that there is no credible evidence of any adverse health effects *to anyone* at the level of 1 ppm in water, regardless of their health condition or how much water they drink. Does recent science reviewed by the NRC panel bring this into question?

5. **Highest exposed people-** Does this report find any Americans currently exceed the EPA's "safe" dose of fluoride (8 milligrams per day for adults) from all sources combined: water, food, beverages, and dental products? If so, does that suggest the drinking water level needs to be reduced?

6. **2 liters per day-** The current safe drinking water standard of 4 ppm is based on the assumption that no one drinks more than two liters of water or beverages per day. Did the panel consider people who drink more, to also protect them from over-dose?

7. **Infants and children-** Since infants and children drink and eat much more relative to their body weight than adults and are more likely to swallow toothpaste, did the panel consider this factor when determining safe exposure levels for them? What proportion, if any, of infants and children in America are currently believed to exceed a safe dose of fluoride?

8. **Would you allow your child 4 ppm for life?** The current maximum allowable drinking water level is 4 ppm. Having studied the latest science, would any of the panel members feel confident allowing their child to drink water with 4 ppm fluoride for their entire lives?

9. **Is crippling skeletal fluorosis the only concern?** The 4 ppm standard was based on preventing crippling skeletal fluorosis. Does the report find any health effects which may occur at lower doses than required for crippling skeletal fluorosis?

10. **Specific findings by health effect-** Could you briefly summarize the report's findings about the degree of concern for people drinking 4 ppm or lower water for the following health effects which have been associated with fluoride:

- a. bone fracture, arthritis, early stages of skeletal fluorosis
- b. neurotoxicity
- c. thyroid function
- d. kidney function
- e. reproductive health
- f. interaction with lead or aluminum to enhance toxicity

11. **Recent scientific findings-** Have any previously unknown health effects been found in scientific research since the last NRC review of fluoride toxicity in 1993?

12. **Dental fluorosis?** Does the report make recommendations on whether dental fluorosis (enamel defects caused by fluoride) of the "moderate" to "severe" grade should be considered adverse health effects?

13. **Adequate safety margin?** Does the panel consider there is an adequate safety margin between the current 4 ppm MCL and the recommendation by the ADA and Public Health Service that fluoride be added to water at a level of 1 ppm?

14. **Guidance to cities and states considering fluoridation-** Fluoridation decisions have arisen in many cities recently and there are a number of states where mandatory state-wide fluoridation has been advocated. In several of these, local officials have decided to await the release of this NRC report to help them decide whether to legislate fluoridation. What guidance does this report offer to those cities and states? Is fluoridation safe for everyone – all ages, states of health, dietary habits, etc -- beyond any reasonable scientific doubt?

15. **Unanswered health questions?** Do any members of the panel believe that there are any unresolved health questions concerning public exposure to fluoride?