

Studies show fluoridation is safe and effective

By Dr. Ira R. Kirshen

Second opinion

In her letter published Oct. 23 – Where's the Science? – Waterloo Coun. Angela Vieth suggests she's been waiting three years for the science that proves water fluoridation is safe and effective.

The science has always been there, and it must be reviewed and interpreted accurately by experts with the proper education and training – not internet activists who deny the science no matter what we place before them.

In my original letter to The Record, I stated that the Ontario Dental Association would be happy to take part in any public information meeting held on water fluoridation in Waterloo. We haven't received any invitations to appear at any meetings, public or otherwise. I, again, offer up my expertise and that of the 7,000-strong members of the Ontario Dental Association.

The safety and efficacy of fluoride in drinking water is supported by 60 years of numerous, sound and properly conducted scientific studies, which have been reviewed by a great number of informed experts. It is this science the ODA brings to the table, and this science has been readily available to anyone who seeks it out. Here is just a minute fraction of the scientific studies and reports supporting water fluoridation:

- Findings and Recommendations of the Fluoride Expert Panel, Health Canada, April 2008, Dr. Steven M. Levy, Dr. Robert Tardif, Dr. Christopher Clark.
- Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality Summary Table, prepared by the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee

on Drinking Water, May 2008.

- Water Fluoridation and the Environment: Current Perspective in the United States, Howard F. Pollick, BDS, MPH. International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health, 2004: 10.

- Fluoride in Drinking-water, J. Fawell et al., World Health Organization, 2006.

- Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General, Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Public Health Service, 2000.

- A Systematic Review of the Efficacy and Safety of Fluoridation, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Government, 2007.

- One in a Million – The Facts About Water Fluoridation 2nd Edition British Fluoridation Society, The U.K. Public Health Association, The British Dental Association and The Faculty of Public Health, 2004.

All these articles have bibliographies and references numbering into the thousands which must be interpreted and analyzed, and when done show the safety and efficacy of fluoridated water. They are scientific proof of the highest calibre, and name-calling by naysayers does not change their conclusion and the irrefutable truth surrounding the evidence.

It appears some people have already made up their minds about water fluoridation. Unfortunately, Vieth's decision is based on misinformation and incorrect interpretations of reports that populate the internet. She may not like what the science and independent experts say about the safety and efficacy of fluoridated water but she is doing a disservice to her constituents by alleging a lack of information on the science of water fluoridation when it's there for the reading.

In her letter, Vieth unjustly

fear-mongers regarding "trace co-contaminants arsenic, lead ...", but we know from various studies, such as the Howard F. Pollick study in 2004, that the levels of co-contaminants are undetectable. The Pollick study confirms that any arsenic and lead levels are "well below all current (50 parts per billion) and proposed (10 ppb) EPA standards."

Again, I, and local Waterloo dentists, would be happy to meet with you – and city council – to discuss the facts. I don't wish to engage in a war of words and hyperbole; I simply want the chance to address the city and its citizens on the facts regarding water fluoridation.

In the end, it is the women, children and men of Waterloo who will benefit from fluoridated water.

Dr. Ira R. Kirshen is president of the Ontario Dental Association.