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Episode 04: Does Fluoride Lower Your IQ?_004

It has long been known that fluoride makes your teeth more resistant to cavities, but can fluoride also be lowering your IQ and that of your family? Stay tuned for the answer to this question and other issues surrounding the controversy about fluoride.

Hello everyone. I am Dr Lisa Germain and you are listening to episode number four of this old tooth, a podcast devoted to providing you with truthful agenda free information about how you can get and keep a beautiful healthy smile for life. Today I will be discussing the risks and the benefits of fluoride.

Fluoride is often called nature's cavity fighter and for good reason. Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that helps prevent cavities in children and adults by making the outer surface of your teeth also called the enamel more resistant to the acid attacks that cause tooth decay.

There are two ways that fluoride makes the outer surface of your tooth harder. The first one occurs from the inside and the other one occurs from the outside. Let me explain. When you are a child before your teeth break through your gums, the fluoride taken in from foods, beverages and dietary supplements is deposited directly into the enamel layer of the tooth.

This process is called mineralization and when it happens this way it provides what is called a systemic benefit and what this means is that it happens from the inside of your system from ingesting the actual fluoride. Now after your teeth erupt, fluoride also helps to rebuild or re-mineralize the tooth enamel and reverses early signs of tooth decay. So when you brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste or use other fluoride dental products, the fluoride is applied to the surface of your tooth and this provides what is called a topical benefit. In addition, the fluoride you take in from foods and beverages continues to provide a topical benefit because it becomes a part of your saliva constantly bathing the teeth with tiny amounts of fluoride that help rebuild this weakened tooth enamel. Now the mineral fluoride is found naturally in soil, water and foods and it is also produced synthetically for use in drinking water, toothpaste, mouthwash and various other products.

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Your dentist may recommend a professional fluoride application in their office. These treatments contain a much higher level of fluoride than the amounts found in toothpaste, mouth rinses and your drinking water. Your dentist may also want to prescribe a fluoride supplement in the form of either a liquid or a tablet. Fluoride intake is most critical between the ages of six months and 16 years. This is the time when the primary teeth, the baby teeth and the permanent teeth, the adult teeth develop. However, adults benefit from fluoride too, particularly if they are at an increased risk of developing tooth decay. Now some of the things that could increase your risk for tooth decay would be dry mouth, gum disease, history of frequent cavities, presence of crowns and bridges, or if you have braces. I am planning on going into that in much greater detail in a future episode.

So now that I have told you all the wonderful things about fluoride, I know you want to ask me why is there such a huge controversy about its use?

We do know that excessive fluoride can cause dental fluorosis. This appears as faint white lines or streaks on the teeth and can only occur the first way that I discussed earlier during tooth development, before the teeth have erupted by ingesting too much fluoride. Usually it is barely noticeable. However severe fluorosis can occur and this can in fact create some pretty unsightly looking brown stains on the teeth. Now the EPA only regulates public water systems and the cases of severe dental fluorosis are usually seen when the primary water source comes from an area like a well that is not regulated by the EPA and the fluoride level in this naturally occurring water source far exceeds the levels recommended by the EPA.

There are many things that can be done to minimize the appearance of these stains and the good news is that it doesn't damage the teeth. If anything, it just makes the teeth more resistant to decay. However, if you are using a private water source, you might want to have the water tested to make sure that it doesn't have excessive percentages of fluoride in it.

But the bigger question is, does fluoride really interfere with neurological development? I decided to look into that in greater depth and what I found was that the scariest part about fluoride is how much misinformation there is on the Internet about it. Take for example, the article titled Harvard Study Confirms Fluoride, Reduces Children's IQ, and truthfully that is the article that prompted me to do this show. Let me read you an excerpt from that article. A recently published Harvard University Meta analysis funded by the National Institutes of health has concluded that children who live in areas with highly fluoridated water have significantly lower IQ scores than those who live in low fluoride areas. And just to be clear, that is a quote from the article about the study, not from the study itself.

So let's take a look at the actual Harvard study first. There will be a PDF link for this actual Harvard study in my show notes. But in brief, here's what I found. The study was a Meta analysis. This means that it took the data from several studies of the same kind and it was looking for a trend. All of the studies were

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done in Far Eastern and Middle Eastern countries where the drinking water far exceeded that recommended as safe by the EPA. Now that amount is 4 parts per million and it far exceeded what is allowed in public drinking water, which ranges from 0.7 to 1.2 parts per million. What this means is that some of the exposed groups had access to drinking water with fluoride concentrations that were 10 times higher than normal.

In addition to that, in the conclusion of the study, there's a statement that says the estimated decrease in average IQ associated with Fluoride exposure based on our analysis may seem small and maybe within the measurement error of IQ testing. Still each of the articles reviewed had deficiencies in some cases rather serious ones that limit the conclusions that can be drawn. So what you can see is that there is an obvious disparity between the facts of the actual study versus the article that was written about the study. My next step was to look into the author of the article. Certainly the title was designed to create hysteria and the content of the article was clearly a gross exaggeration of the facts.

The article was written by Dr. Joseph Mercola, who is not a true MD. Dr Mercola operates one of the Internet's largest consumer information sites, or should I say misinformation sites:?

His site promotes medical advice that routinely clashes with conventional medical science. For example, he touts vitamin D as the silver bullet for cancer and he advises against immunization mammography and you guessed it, water fluoridation. The medical community has repeatedly called Dr Macola, dangerous and that he steers patients away from proven medical treatments in favor of unproven therapies and supplements, which of course he sells. According to Dr. Steven Barrett who runs the medical watchdog site, quackwatch.org the information he's putting out to the public is extremely misleading. He exaggerates the risks and potential dangers of legitimate science-based medical care and he promotes a lot of unsubstantiated ideas and sells products with claims that are just not true. So I decided to check out his website and what I found out is that he also doesn't believe in root canals to save teeth or if you needed an extraction implants to replace them.

He then follows that up with a discussion about nutrition. So what I really would like to ask Dr Mercola is this, how are people supposed to get proper nutrition if they don't have any teeth to eat with?

So here we go. What's the truth? Well, obviously too much fluoride is not good for you. However, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't find any indication that fluoride at therapeutic levels was harmful and the benefits are enormous. Tooth decay is the second most prevalent disease for young children, second only to the common cold. Study after study has found that one to two milligrams of fluoride per liter in the water is not only safe but good for you. But that's only assuming you want to keep your teeth! In addition, because many people worldwide cannot afford the cost of regular dental checkups. Adding fluoride can offer savings and benefits to those who need them.

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And Fluoridating our water systems saves money for everybody. When it comes to the cost of treating dental disease, everyone pays not just those who need treatment, but the entire community through higher health insurance premiums and higher taxes. But the average lifetime cost per person to Fluoridate a water system is less than the cost of one dental filling. It is important to know the level of fluoride in your drinking water. I am going to put a link in my show notes that will take you to the page on the Center for Disease Control's website and on this page you can type in the state that you live in and learn about the fluoride level in your drinking water. Also, you can find out the number of people served by the system and the water source.

And now for a fun fact!

It takes 43 muscles to frown, but only 17 to smile and that's reason enough to choose to smile. On my next show, I will be answering the question Are cavities, ulcers and cold sores contagious? Now that is an episode that you don't want to miss. If you have any dental questions that you would like addressed on my show, go to my website@www.thisoldtooth.com and it would mean so much to me if you subscribe to my podcast. right now, I am going to let my next 250 subscribers download for free, my E-book, The Ultimate Guide: How to Choose a Dentist. Thank you for listening. I appreciate you more than you can imagine and remember, be true to your teeth or they will be false to you!

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