

LIFETIME FAMILY WELLNESS

Fluoridated Water Increases Risk of Cancer in Boys

On April 6, 2006, WebMD reported on a study that is to be published in the May 2006 issue of Cancer Causes and Controls that shows a link between fluoridated water and an increased risk of a deadly bone cancer. The results of this study were that boys who grew up in communities that added at least moderate levels of fluoride to their water got bone cancer, specifically osteosarcoma, more often than boys who drank water with little or no fluoride. The study did not find the same results in girls. The more fluoride in the water during the years the boys experienced growth spurts, the higher the risk of the deadly bone cancer.

Elise Bassin, DDS, author of the study and clinical instructor in oral health policy and epidemiology at Harvard said she "was surprised by the results." She continued, "Having a background in dentistry and dental public health, [I] was taught that fluoride at recommended levels is safe and effective for the prevention of dental [cavities]," Bassin says in the statement. "All of [our analyses] were consistent in finding an association between fluoride levels in drinking water and an increased risk of osteosarcoma for males diagnosed before age 20, but not consistently for girls." The article noted that Osteosarcoma is about 50% more common in boys than in girls. Additionally, it was noted that boys tend to have more fluoride in their bones than girls. Also, fluoride collects in the bones, and it is more likely to accumulate in the bones during periods of rapid bone growth.

A nonprofit watchdog organization, called the Environmental Working Group, (EWG - www.ewg.org), says water fluoridation should stop until further research can refute or confirm Dr. Bassin's findings. Tim Kropp, PhD, a senior scientist at EWG told WebMD in an interview that, "About 65% of the U.S. water supply has added fluoride." He strongly suggested, "With evidence this strong, it only makes sense to act on it. Right now, it makes the most sense to put fluoride in toothpaste, and not into our water. It's not like this is a huge contaminant that will cost billions of dollars to fix. We can just stop adding it to our water it if we want to."

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