

Mercury Fillings Banned In Norway

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The Townsend Letter, a well-known journal for holistic medicine practitioners, announced recently in 2008 that mercury has been banned from all dental fillings in Norway. From the beginning of this year dentists in Norway have to start using safer alternatives. The ban goes further than amalgam fillings, covering many other products; including measuring instruments such as thermometers and sphygmomanometers for measuring blood pressure.

Norway has always been a leader in banning mercury, one of the worst neurotoxins known to man. Norway had previously restricted the use of amalgam fillings, especially in children and pregnant and nursing women, but is the first in the world to enforce a complete ban.

Announcing the ban, Norway's Minister of Environment and Development Erik Solheim said: "Mercury is among the most dangerous environmental toxins. Satisfactory alternatives to mercury in products are available, and it is therefore fitting to introduce a ban."

Norway is concerned that mercury in our teeth and in the environment is extremely dangerous, and can harm the development of children. Unfortunately for Norway, most of the mercury in its environment comes from other countries that take a more relaxed view to one of the most toxic substances known to man.

It would be wise for many other countries around the world to follow this excellent prerogative, taken by the Norwegian government to protect its people. The worrying thing is that there is too much self-interest that may prevent other countries from following suit in the near future.

WHY ARE MANY AUTHORITIES PLAYING THE OSTRICH GAME?

Despite the overwhelming evidence from scientific research, there are still many authorities purporting that amalgams do not cause health conditions or have not been proven. One can only hypothesize why this attitude still prevails!

For example, the American Dental Association continues to maintain, as it did in 1984, that "when mercury is combined with the metals used in dental amalgams, its toxic properties are made harmless." This is the same position adopted by the British Dental Association. However, up until now this position has been based upon reverse logic that amalgam fillings are safe because the evidence that is emerging does not prove irrefutably otherwise.

In 1993, the US Public Health Service issued a report evaluating the safety of dental amalgam. Although the report allowed that small amounts of mercury vapour are released from your fillings and can be absorbed into the body, and that these could cause small responses in that rare group of allergic individuals, it concluded that "there is scant evidence that the health of the vast majority of people with amalgams is compromised, nor that removing amalgam fillings has a beneficial effect on health" (Journal of American Medical Association, 1993, 269: 2491). The American Food and Drug Administration's position continues to be that there is no valid data to demonstrate clinical harm to patients or that having them removed will prevent adverse health effects, or reverse the course of existing diseases (Journal of American Medical Association, 12 June 1991).

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH TO SUPPORT AMALGAM TOXICITY?

Even though Norway and Sweden are putting bans on the use of mercury, and everyone agrees that it is a 'dangerous element,' there are still many authorities that

are not budging on their stance regard[ing] a poisonous substance. However, there is also much scientific research that shows that amalgams and mercury can cause a myriad of health problems. Let's take a look at a few!

Research has shown that dentists have double the number of brain tumours accompanied by high concentrations of body mercury (British Journal of Industrial Medicine, 1991; 48: 729-34).

Further recent evidence has demonstrated that amalgam in teeth can also cause subtle brain damage as well. Several years ago, dentists in Singapore were compared to other dentists who were less exposed to mercury. The amalgam using dentists performed less well on tests of neurological function, even though they did just as well on intelligence tests. The higher the exposure to mercury, the worse the performance on the neurological tests (British Journal of Industrial Medicine, 1992; 49: 782-90, British Medical Journal, November 28, 1992).

American dentists were also tested by Dr Diana Echeverria, a neuro-toxicologist at the University of Washington in America, to see whether they showed signs of mercury toxicity. She found evidence of central nervous system disorders - subtle losses of manual dexterity and concentration.

The American Dental Association and the British Dental Association have stated that mercury in amalgam fillings is inert when mixed with the other metals and placed in the mouth. However, other researchers have proved that mercury vapours are continuously released from the fillings every time we chew - in fact, chewing gum doubles the mercury levels in the blood and trebles them in the urine.

The World Health Organization has found that the average individual could absorb as much as 120 micrograms of mercury per day from their amalgam fillings, which is considered a toxic dose.

Further research has shown a positive correlation between the level of mercury in mothers' breast milk and the number of dental amalgams in the mouth. The mean levels of mercury in milk of amalgam-free mothers was less than 0.2mcg/litre, while milk from mothers with 1-4 amalgam fillings contained 0.50 mcg/litre, with 5-7 fillings 0.57mcg/litre and with more than 7 fillings 2.11 mcg/litre (Trace Elem Med Biol., 1998, Mar; 12(1): 23-7).

Dr Murray J Vimy, clinical associate professor of the Department of Medicine, plus numerous other medical researchers from the Departments of Radiology, Medicine and Medical Physiology at the University of Calgary in Canada, have spent more than a decade examining the effects of amalgam fillings on sheep, monkeys and, more recently, humans. Their published evidence conclusively proves that mercury from amalgam fillings migrates to tissue in the body the oral cavity, the lungs and the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, causing a type of "timed released poisoning", as Vimy has called it. Vimy's animal studies, which were met by ridicule within the dental community, have been vindicated by the work of Professor H Vasken Aposhian, Head of the Molecular and Cellular Biology Department of the University of Arizona in Tucson. Aposhian and his team graded the amalgam filling content of human volunteers, from which they were given an amalgam score.

The study participants were then given a salt of 2, 3-dimercaptopropane 1-sulfonic acid (DMPS), a chelating agent which binds to mercury and removes it from the body through urine. An analysis of the results showed a positive correlation between the amount of amalgam in the teeth and the amount of amalgam in the body.

Aposhian's team was also able to show that two thirds of the mercury excreted in the urine of those study participants with dental amalgams came from their fillings (FASEB Journal, 1992; 6: 2472-6; Clinical Toxicology, 1992; 30 (4): 505-28). New evidence on humans shows that mercury fillings in pregnant women may also affect

the growing foetus. In 1989 the University of Calgary Medical School published evidence that within three days of placing amalgam fillings in pregnant sheep, mercury showed up in the blood, pituitary glands, liver, kidney and placenta of their lambs. By 33 days (around the time of birth), most foetal tissue had higher levels of mercury than that of the mothers. During nursing, the mother sheep were found to have eight times more mercury in their milk as in their blood (American J Physiology, 1990; 258: R939-945).

More recently, Professor Gustav Drasch, a forensic toxicologist and his colleagues at the Institut für Rechtsmedizin in Munich, examined the brains, liver and kidneys of dead human babies and foetuses which had aborted for medical reasons. They found these levels correlated significantly with the number of amalgam fillings in their mothers. Furthermore, children accumulated mercury in their kidneys apparently from the mothers' amalgams, to a similar extent as adults do from their own fillings. As most of the children weren't breastfed or fed for only a short period, the researchers concluded that the mercury must have crossed the placenta (European Journal of Pediatrics, 1994; 153: 607-10).

Current research suggests that mercury vapour from fillings may be one of the predominant underlying causes of a broad spectrum of conditions, ranging from gum disease, migraine, headaches, poor memory, depression, anxiety, mental lethargy, chronic fatigue, growth, allergies such as eczema and asthma, and sensitivity reactions to food and inhalants, to rheumatism, arthritis, backache, kidney disease, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis and other neurological disorders.

Watch this fascinating video made by the University of Calgary, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Physiology and Biophysics, entitled How Mercury Causes Brain Neuron Degeneration as well as the Smoking Tooth video of mercury vapour escaping from an extracted amalgam tooth under various conditions.

Another interesting video shows the effects of amalgams, with good references and scientific experiments. Also worth watching is a video entitled "Quecksilber: The Strange Story of Mercury Amalgam."

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