

# Parents Should be Warned: Fluoridated Water is Not Recommended for Infants

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Fluoride Action Network Press Release

A new study confirms infants fed formula reconstituted with fluoridated water are at greater risk of developing discolored teeth (dental fluorosis). (1) The American Dental Association (ADA) warned dentists about this in 2006 but has done little or nothing to inform the nearly 200 million Americans who live in communities with fluoridated drinking water.

The study by Levy et al., a Journal of the American Dental Association cover story (October 2010), confirms Levy's earlier studies, which show "[F]luoride intakes during each of the first 4 years were individually significantly related to fluorosis on maxillary central incisors, with the first year most important," and that "[I]nfant formulas reconstituted with higher fluoride water can provide 100 to 200 times more fluoride than breastmilk, or cow's milk." (2, 3)

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 32% of American children have dental fluorosis, an increase of 23% from the 1980s. (4) Black and Hispanic populations have even higher rates. Dental fluorosis is a visible sign that a child was overexposed to fluoride. Pictures of fluorosis:

<http://www.fluoridealert.org/health/teeth/fluorosis/moderate-severe.html>

"The message from Dr. Levy's work is loud and clear: Don't give babies fluoridated water," says Paul Connett, PhD, Executive Director, Fluoride Action Network (FAN). "Unfortunately the ADA has known about these risks for more than four years. Researchers are telling dentists; but dentists are not telling parents."

This and other little-known adverse fluoride health effects led Connett to co-author, "The Case Against Fluoride: How Hazardous Waste Ended Up in Our Drinking Water and the Bad Science and Powerful Politics that Keep it There," with James Beck, MD, PhD, professor emeritus of medical physics, University of Alberta and Spedding Micklem, DPhil, professor emeritus at Edinburgh University.

A recent review in The Lancet (5) describes fluoride as "an emerging neurotoxic substance" that may damage the developing brain. The National Research Council (NRC) has identified fluoride as an "endocrine disrupter" that may impair thyroid function. A recent Harvard University study links fluoride to bone cancer (6).

"Approximately half of the newborns and infants I see in practice are fed formula reconstituted with fluoridated water, which I find alarming since the blood-brain barrier is not even developed until 6 months of age, placing these young infants at risk for neurotoxic effects that can be severe and permanent," says Dr. Yolanda Whyte, a pediatrician in Georgia. "Parents should be warned not to give fluoridated water to babies and children, and they should know that fluoride is also present in

juice and other water-reconstituted beverages. I diagnose dental fluorosis on average 5 times daily, but fluoride doesn't only affect teeth, it can potentially affect the brain and nervous system, kidneys, bones, and other tissues in young children during their critical stages of organ development. A public awareness campaign is urgently needed."

FAN will launch a campaign in November to urge water companies and public-health officials to inform parents that fluoridated water should not be mixed into infant formula. "If the ADA and CDC won't educate parents, then FAN will," said Connett.

FAN is the leading science and advocacy group focused on health issues surrounding fluoride in water, food, air, pesticides, and industrial exposures. Dr. Connett was an invited presenter at the initial meeting of the NRC panel and FAN researchers submitted extensive scientific information throughout the panel's proceedings. Visit: [www.fluoridealert.org](http://www.fluoridealert.org)

### References:

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- (3) Levy SM and Guha-Chowdhury N. 1999. Total fluoride intake and implications for dietary fluoride supplementation. *Journal of Public Health Dentistry* 59(4):211-23.
- (4) CDC. Table 23 from Beltrán-Aguilar et al. 2005. Surveillance for Dental Caries, Dental Sealants, Tooth Retention, Edentulism, and Enamel Fluorosis --- United States, 1988--1994 and 1999—2002. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*. 54(03):1-44.  
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Full article at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5403a1.htm>
- (5) Grandjean P and Landrigan P. 2006. Developmental neurotoxicity of industrial chemicals. *The Lancet* 368(9553):2167-78. December 6.
- (6) Bassin EB, Wypij D, Davis RB, Mittleman MA. 2006. Age-specific fluoride exposure in drinking water and osteosarcoma (United States). *Cancer Causes and Control* 17(4):421-8. May.

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