

European Countries Banning the Use of Fluoride

Because of health concerns, Belgium banned the sale of fluoride supplements to prevent tooth decay, France removed sodium fluoride from the market for the treatment of osteoporosis and Ireland plans to lower water fluoride levels. And, because poor quality research has been carried out on fluoride and health, British scientists called for more research into the health effects of adding fluoride to drinking water in a [report](#) published by the Medical Research Council.

Belgium

Belgium banned fluoride supplements because excessive use of fluoride increases the risk of osteoporosis, could damage the nervous system and, even Belgian dentists agree, is ineffective when ingested.

"Belgian health minister at the time Magda Aelvoet said she was now pressing for a Europe-wide ban, hinting that the removal of supplements was just the first step towards removing the chemical from the food chain," according to the article. Belgium's ban is a result of a report by the health ministry's advisory body. The health ministry plans to present the review to the European Commission this month in a bid to make Europe follow its lead, the article says.

According to Nutraingredients.com: "'We think we have very strong arguments for the ban,' responded the ministry spokesman. 'And it is rather uncertain when the list of supplements (the Directive) will come in. We have asked the council of health to prepare a review of the existing scientific evidence to be presented to the European Commission so we are presenting them with a solid scientific basis for the ban to be brought into Europe...,' said Belgium's spokesman."

According to Nutraingredients.com: "'We base our opposition to fluoride on the fact that there is no positive impact from the supplements - brushing teeth with fluoride toothpaste is sufficient and there is no reason to do anything else. Fluoride should be applied topically to prevent caries, but should not be swallowed, especially by children who are more vulnerable to it. Although there is natural fluoride in tea and water, for example, we think that there are significant differences between the natural chemical and the synthetic fluoride used in dental products. And we have looked at a general review of the total literature, rather than a single study - we all know studies can sometimes be biased,' responded the health ministry spokesman,"

"He explained: '.... The position is very clear now, and it is supported by the dentists in Belgium. People should not consume fluoride but instead use it directly on teeth, such as when brushing with fluoride toothpaste. There may be an issue for children under the age of six, who sometimes swallow toothpaste, but we recommend that doses should be as low as possible,' according to the Nutraingredients.com article."

France

France's health products' regulating agency suspended the sale of products containing fluoride salts for the treatment of osteoporosis and was reported in January 2002. The efficacy of fluoride to treat osteoporosis appeared unfavorable compared to alternative treatments and it poses a risk of fluorosis in the long run.

Ireland

An Ireland Government-commissioned report advises that fluoride levels added to water supplies be reduced and proposes further research into fluoridation. according to Irishhealth.com. The lon-

awaited report of the Forum on Fluoridation is to be published on September 10 in Dublin.

The dose reduction is proposed because of the wider ingestion of fluoride today from other sources - mainly by children and adults through regular use of toothpaste, according to Irishhealth.com. "A major High Court action is being taken by medical campaigner, Dr. Andrew Rynne against the State on the issue of fluoridation claiming that it is against the interests of public health due to toxicity. Around three quarters of the population receive fluoridated water, although some county councils have petitioned the government to be allowed not to add fluoride to the water in their areas," reports Irishhealth.com.

United Kingdom

Because poor quality research has been carried out on fluoride and health, British scientists called for more research into the health effects of adding fluoride to drinking water.

About five million people in Britain receive water with the fluoride content artificially increased.. Another 1.5 million drink naturally fluoridated water. It's unknown whether naturally and artificial fluoride react the same or differently in the human body.

The Department of Health said it would study the absorption of fluoride, as the council recommended.

Much of the current evidence on the benefits of fluoride comes from research conducted several decades ago. A [review](#) conducted by York University, published in September 2000, concluded that little high quality research had been carried out on the broader question of fluoride and health. The British Government commissioned the Medical Research Council to consider what further research in this area might be required and what priorities should apply to inform public health policy in this area in 2000.

The group concluded that if new studies show that the uptake of fluoride from artificially fluoridated water is substantially higher than from naturally fluoridated water, then it will be necessary to further investigate the long term effects of fluoridation on hip fractures.

The group recommended an updated analysis of the data on fluoridation and cancer rates and suggested that any new studies on the causes of bone cancer could easily include an assessment of exposure to fluoride.

[Suite 101.com](#) **September 5, 2002**