

Health Bits and Pieces (HFN 30:3)

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And their hard teeth hurt when they bite

A recent Harvard University study has shown that water fluoridation can have a harmful effect on brain function. Children in high-fluoride areas were found to have significantly lower IQs than those who lived in no-fluoride or low-fluoride areas. The children researched in the study were up to 14 years of age, and there is some speculation that young brains may not be able to fully develop, especially if the toxicity caused damage at a very early age. Researcher Philippe Grandjean commented that “Fluoride seems to fit in with lead, mercury, and other poisons that cause chemical brain drain. The effect of each toxicant may seem small, but the combined damage on a population scale can be serious, especially because the brain power of the next generation is crucial to all of us.”

Choi AL, Sun G, Zhang Y, Grandjean P, “Developmental Fluoride Neurotoxicity: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” Environmental Health Perspectives 2012, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1104912>.

Malignant Cells

The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified cell phones as a “carcinogenic hazard” placing it in the same category as lead, engine exhaust, and chloroform. After examining peer-reviewed studies on cell-phone safety, 31 scientists from 14 countries, including the United States, made the decision after finding enough evidence to categorize personal exposure to cell phone radiation as “possibly carcinogenic to humans.” The evidence shows an increased risk of glioma, a type of brain cancer, and acoustic neuroma, a benign growth on the acoustic nerve. Although WHO has previously stated that there is not sufficient evidence to link cell phones with any risk, the European Environmental Agency has held the position that long-term cell-phone use could be as big a public health risk as smoking, asbestos, and leaded gasoline. The risk may be substantially greater for children. According to Dr. Keith Black, chairman of Neurology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, “Children's skulls and scalps are thinner. So the radiation can penetrate deeper into the brain of children and young adults. Their cells are dividing at a faster rate, so the impact of radiation can be much larger,”

Baan R, Grosse Y, Lauby-Secretan B, et al, on behalf of the WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer Monograph Working Group, “Carcinogenicity of radio frequency electromagnetic fields,” Lancet Oncology, Volume 12, Issue 7, pp 624-626, July 2011; doi:10.1016/S1470-2045(11)70147-4, Published Online: 22 June 2011.

Garden Variety Antibiotic

Essential oil of oregano has been found to control a common hospital infection that is extremely resistant to antibiotics. Oil of oregano is effective when applied topically against methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (or MRSA) as well as against a number of other bacteria. Oil of oregano is also given orally in European botanical medicine as an antibiotic for bronchial, lung, gastrointestinal, and other infections.

Eng W, Norman R, "Development of an oregano-based ointment with anti-microbial activity including activity against methicillin-resistant," Staphylococcus aureus. Journal of Drugs in Dermatology, 2010 Apr;9(4):377-80.

Cardiovascular Health Supplements

Recent studies support the use of popular nutritional supplements for heart-attack and stroke prevention. Increasing intake of magnesium can reduce the likelihood of death from stroke and cardiovascular disease, according to a Japanese study that was carried out over 15 years. Magnesium is an important mineral that is deficient in the diet of many Americans.

Supplementation with Coenzyme Q-10 (CoQ-10) decreased signs of inflammation in the blood in patients with coronary artery disease. Blood-test parameters for inflammation include interleukin-6 (IL-6), homocysteine, and c-reactive protein (CRP). Long-term elevated levels of these inflammatory "markers" are strongly associated with an increased risk of developing coronary artery disease. Increased levels of CoQ-10 in the blood resulted in decreased levels of IL-6 and CRP but did not affect homocysteine (Note: B vitamins and folic acid are commonly used to lower homocysteine levels in the blood).

Zhang W, Ito H, Ohira T, Date C, Tamakoshi A, "Associations of dietary magnesium intake with mortality from cardiovascular disease: The JACC study," Atherosclerosis Volume 221, Issue 2 , pp 587-595, April 2012.

Lee B, Huang Y, Chen S, Lin P, "Effects of coenzyme Q10 supplementation on inflammatory markers (high-sensitivity C-reactive protein, interleukin-6, and homocysteine) in patients with coronary artery disease," Nutrition 2012 Jul;28(7-8):767-72. Epub 2012 Feb 17.

Prostate Protection

An epidemiological study in Washington State found that men who used grape seed extract reduced their risk of developing prostate cancer by 41%. The participants were 35,239 male members, 50-76 years of age, in a study called the "VITamins And Lifestyle (VITAL) cohort." This study is designed to investigate the associations of the use of vitamin, mineral, and specialty supplements with cancer risk. Grape seed extract was the only one of the supplements surveyed showing a clear risk reduction for prostate cancer. No similar risk reduction was noted from the use of chondroitin, Co-enzyme Q10, fish oil, garlic, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, glucosamine, or saw palmetto.

Brasky T, Kristal A, Navarro S, et al, "Specialty Supplements and Prostate Cancer Risk in the VITamins And Lifestyle (VITAL) Cohort," Nutrition and Cancer 2011 May; 63(4): 573-582, doi: 10.1080/01635581.2011.553022.
