

COMMENTARY

Can we trust water fluoridation?

Robert J. Fleming

For the Weekender

Everything about drinking water comes down to trusting the forthrightness and credibility of those in charge.

Last week our Medical Officer of Health (Dr. Nolan) finally admitted fluoridation was off across Waterloo for most of 2009. System failures and scheduled maintenance were blamed for simultaneous ruin of all fluoridation feed sites. Protocol is to report within 90 days. Why keep things a secret from the public, dentists, physicians, and pharmacists for some 200 days? Daily consumption of fluoridated water was supposed to be important to oral health. Evidently, not at all important when it's off. Should we even fluoridate?

In January 2008 Nolan spoke on fluoridation at Waterloo Council. Nolan said, "The compound itself, HFSA, is actually a gas, and so in order to use it and ship it, it's compressed ... and so, for sure, the concentration in that cylinder

would be quite toxic if, you know, that gas was released ... "

HFSA (hydrofluorosilicic acid) is a water-based scrubbing mixture from smokestack chimney emissions of phosphate fertilizer production. It's not a gas, it's a liquid. It's not shipped in compressed/pressurized form, nor is it shipped in pressurized tanker trucks. Just read any HFSA' certificate of analysis accompanying each shipment, or any' material safety data sheet. Observe fluoridation sites where HFSA flows out of a Region-owned delivery truck, and is dribbled into water. Review health and safety training about dangers of HFSA splashes when handling. Google HFSA on the internet. HFSA has been used in our Region for almost three decades. Were you told?

During the presentation Nolan was asked, "Is there evidence that we're fluoridating water in Kitchener or people in Waterloo are not receiving fluoridated water?" Nolan claimed, "No, this has been a long enough standing issue that our system has grown up this

way, and we have valves that stop Waterloo water from going into Kitchener, and stop Kitchener water from going into Waterloo."

Despite Nolan's claims, a citizen later proved that Waterloo's fluoridated water goes to all of Elmira, all of St. Jacobs, other parts of Woolwich Township, parts of Wilmot Township, and parts of Kitchener, without these municipalities being asked or told.

How could our Medical Officer ever handle a water health emergency, stop the flow of over-fluoridated water and notify affected communities, without knowing where that water flows to? Is proper emergency planning in place, in light of such damning oversights? Can we trust over-fluoridation will never occur, and proper health alerts will always occur?

Some dentists claim they know which child comes from fluoridated Waterloo, simply by looking in the child's mouth. One wonders how so, given the much broader and secretive Regional fluoridation program going on. What if

a dentist or doctor in one of these 'never-told' fluoridated communities prescribes fluoride supplements. The result is double-dosed patients. What about the risk to 'never-told' fluoride-sensitive patients and kidney patients, who do suffer serious consequences. Health Canada just recently lowered the recommended fluoridation level in drinking water, again, out of concern for the public. Since communities beyond Waterloo were never told they're drinking fluoridated water, did anyone bother to tell them their fluoridation was now off?

Nolan, well apprised of these fumbles, has yet to make public acknowledgement, public apology, or public correction.

Fumbling and covering up led to the Walkerton water tragedy. We are far better off getting our fluoride from toothpaste, mouth rinse, and. our dentist - where concentration, dose and informed consent will be managed.

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