

FIRE WATER

Australia's Industrial Fluoridation Disgrace

Exposing the systematic industrial waste poisoning of Australian drinking water supplies

Merilyn Haines – Interview Transcript

**Interview conducted by
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November 2010

[00:00:33]

Merilyn: My name's Merilyn Haines. I've got a Bachelor of Applied Science in Med Lab Tech. I work in the pathology field.

[00:00:38]

Jaya: Merilyn, you've been heavily involved in the campaign against forced fluoridation of Queensland's water supplies. Could you please give an overview both of yourself and how you became involved in the issue of water fluoridation?

[00:00:55]

Merilyn: Oh, probably about 25 years ago, I read an article on water fluoridation. I very quickly realised what a con it was. It didn't work, it's a poison. It's being put in our water supply and it harms people, and I vowed there and then when I read this article, that you know, if it ever happened to our water supply I'd walk the streets – I didn't want that going into my family's drinking water. About that time, unbeknownst to me, my sister... my sister was living in Townsville, and for about 4 years and as soon as she got to Townsville, she had massive problems with dermatitis. She was going to uni. She would come back here every university holidays and her dermatitis would clear up. She'd go back there and break out again. It was really painful and distressing to her. We would send her up all these various creams and potions and things and nothing happened. She'd go to dermatologists and nothing would help. **[00:01:44]** Just before she was about to leave Townsville, to come back to Brisbane, this doctor said to her that she might have a fluoride allergy. She didn't even realize that Townsville's water was fluoridated. It was one of the few places in Queensland that has been fluoridated, and as soon as she came back to live down here, her dermatitis went away and it's never returned. She never had it before. She's never had it in 25 years since. And that sort of basically confirmed my, you know, opinion that we do not want this in our water. And when we saw the storm clouds gathering, about 5 years ago, we started becoming active and decided, you know, we were going to do everything we possibly could to wake people up to this problem, that people were trying, you know, what the government was trying to do to us.

Jaya: What are the ethical implications of mass medicating public water supplies with industrial waste; and is forced fluoridation ethical in your view?

[00:02:45]

Merilyn: It's very unethical. It goes against all the principles of informed consent for a start, medical informed consent. How dare they, I mean they put these chemicals, they are industrial waste products, into our water, ostensibly to treat our teeth; to decrease tooth decay or prevent tooth decay, which doesn't work, by the way. But I mean, if you go, if you're a patient and you go to a doctor. The doctor will assess your need, offer you a medication. They will follow you up. They will have a dose for you whether you're a child or an adult or an elderly person. You know, if you have specific medical conditions that may not be suitable. They won't put you on that drug. They'll put you on a different drug. This is never considered with fluoridation. You know we have the right to choose our medication and this goes against that completely.

[00:03:48]

Jaya: I'll just go back a step on answering this question. What are the ethical implications of mass medicating the people... with industrial waste?

[00:03:58]

Merilyn: Well for a start, the ethics of it. It's mass medication. So, it's a slippery slope that we're on. Once they decide they put they can put this chemical in our water supply, which is an industrial waste product, I totally agree, what is it then, to stop them putting lithium in our water, which is 'natural', to decrease the amount of manic depressant... depression in our society; or why wouldn't they then put statin drugs into our water supply to decrease cholesterol levels, if there's a problem with high cholesterol in our society, you know. It is, you have to consider this. Once you start doing something like this, where do you stop?

[00:04:41]

Jaya: Merilyn, can you explain for the audience, the finer details of where the fluoride chemicals used in Australian drinking water come from; and also how are they produced?

[00:04:55]

Merilyn: The fluoride chemicals in Australia are either sodium fluoride or two silicofluoride chemicals. Sodium silicofluoride, which is solid and hydrofluorosilicic acid, which is a liquid. A lot of the silicofluorides come from INCITEC PIVOT in Geelong. Sodium fluoride used to come from aluminium smelting, but nowadays most of the fluoro chemicals used are the two silicofluorides, and they can either be produced locally from INCITEC PIVOT or they can be imported from China, particularly, or sometimes Belgium and Japan. I mean they are waste products of the fertiliser industry. The silicofluorides are waste products of the fertilizer industry. What happens is that there's fluoride in the phosphate rock, along with silicon. When they make superphosphate fertilizer, they're converting insoluble phosphate to soluble phosphates so that plants can take it up. [00:05:54] They crush the phosphate rock. They mix it with sulphuric acid and then you get two gases coming off. You get hydrogen fluoride and you get silicon tetrafluoride. These two gases go into a wet scrubber, and they spray water in from the top and when the gases dissolve in the water, they combine together and they form a

new compound called, “hydrofluorosilicic acid”. They then keep on recycling that water through the wet scrubber, dissolving more and more of these gases as they’re coming off, until they get to about 25% hydrofluorosilicic acid, which they then send off. They don’t clean it up anymore than that. They send it off in tankers, rubber-lined tankers, to fluoridation plants, which are attached to water treatment plants.

[00:06:44]

Jaya: Goodness me. I don’t think most Australian people are aware of where this chemical actually comes from. How do you...

Merilyn: I just want to add too, sorry, with the sodium silicofluoride, what they do is they then react the hydrofluorosilicic acid with sodium carbonate, or another name for that is soda ash, and then you get the precipitate. They filter the precipitate off. They dry it, they bag it and they send that to areas that are further away where they can’t tanker the liquid form.

[00:07:21]

Jaya: What do you think, just as a matter of interest for the viewers, do you think people would actually be horrified if they found out that this is actually what they’re drinking?

[00:07:33]

Merilyn: I think they would. Most people don’t want to be drinking toxic waste of any form, and particularly from an aluminium smelting, toxic waste or fertilizer toxic waste, you know, and that’s why the government tries to deny that it is toxic waste, but that’s exactly what it is. They don’t deliberately make these fluorides as a product. They’re actually a waste product of other industries.

[00:07:57]

Jaya: So have these industrial chemicals even been properly tested for safety?

[00:08:02]

Merilyn: Never. No. [Jaya: Anywhere in the World? Anywhere in the world?] In the early days... In the early days they did toxicity studies on sodium fluoride, but that was pharmaceutical grade sodium fluoride. They have never ever tested the sodium, the silicofluoride chemicals – particularly the industrial grade that they use because they don’t clean them up. They are allowed to have small amounts of heavy metals in these chemicals.

[00:08:31]

Jaya: What sort of heavy metals?

Merilyn: Cadmium, mercury, lead.

Jaya: Goodness.

Merilyn: It is only small amounts but I mean, do you... you don’t... nobody deliberately wants to drink sodium, you know, cadmium, mercury or lead.

[00:08:46]

Jaya: But surely, we’ve been told that these are “safe and effective” or at least “safe” chemicals. Are these safe chemicals to ingest?

Merilyn: All fluorides are poisonous. All fluorides are toxic.

[00:09:00]

Jaya: Sulphuryl fluoride has been discussed by a number of people interviewed for this documentary. It seems that many in Australia are unaware of this product. Can you please, for the viewing audience, explain the dangers of sulphuryl fluoride and how did this chemical get approved for use in Australia?

[00:09:23]

Merilyn: This was a couple of years ago now. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, which is the regulatory body for pesticides and veterinary medicines in Australia, they approved DOW AGROSCIENCE'S use of Profume, which is their name for sulphuryl fluoride gas, to fumigate warehouses and food handling areas in Australia. The first approval was for on all whole nuts, all whole grains and all whole dried fruits. So that, there's, a couple of European countries where they have approved this for use but in those countries, it's only for spraying the warehouses themselves. Any food has to be removed first. In Australia, they allow the food to stay in there and basically, when the gas touches food, it goes inside the food and it reacts with the protein and it leaves behind the fluoride. [00:10:30] With, all nuts, that's any sort of nuts, they're allowing 30 parts per million residual fluoride. So that's 30 times higher amount of fluoride that is allowed in fluoridated water, and nobody knows how much, you know, these products... There's, no testing. There's no compulsion for the various state governments to test how much fluoride is in these different types of food. And of course, whole grains, you know the wheat, gets made into flour and all the different products. The nuts are crushed up and put into whole lot of different products. Dried fruit is put into a whole lot of different products, but nobody measures how much fluoride is in these finished products.

[00:11:11]

Jaya: And are any of these products labelled that they've been fumigated?

Merilyn: No. No. There is never any labelled.

Jaya: So, how are people to measure their dose of fluoride?

[00:11:24]

Merilyn: They can't. That's exactly it. And if you're a vegetarian, you eat a lot more nuts or whole grains than other people. You are getting a much higher amount of fluoride into your diet.

Jaya: Just as an aside, just a thought that comes to mind, would overseas countries, who import products from Australia, that are made in Australia, would they perhaps be getting doses of sulphuryl fluoride that they don't know about, because of the Australian regulations?

[00:11:54]

Merilyn: Yes, they would be, because I don't think they are warned and if those countries were aware of it, there might be implications for trade.

Jaya: Marilyn, once fluoride chemicals are added to the water supply, how can their dosage and side effects be monitored adequately and if you could include the difference between concentration and dose for the viewers.

[00:12:21]

Marilyn: Well, first of all, the concentration is just the *amount* of fluoride that they put into the water and you know, it's not it's not 'rocket science' to be able to measure the concentration. So, they can control that fairly well within a certain range, but there's absolutely no control over the dose because the amount of water you drink determines how much fluoride you get. [00:12:41] People who are outdoor workers, people who are athletes, they can, they can drink a *lot more* water and they can drink, you know my nephew is a geologist and he used to drink 10 litres of water every day when he was out on the job. So, he was getting 10 times the dose than someone who drinks one litre of water a day. For people who have got impaired kidney function, they affectively get a higher dose because they can't excrete it in their urine. So there is no, there is no control over dose, there's no control over monitoring because they don't bother. Most doctors don't even realise that there can be side effects from the ingestion of fluoride. So they don't even know what to look for.

[00:13:22]

Jaya: Perhaps you could then, given this knowledge that you've imparted, could you explain how mothers are going to monitor the dose of fluoride for their little babies, especially for those that can't breast feed. They have to use infant formulas and they obviously have to mix it. And, I have seen reports where mothers feel that it's safe for them to boil the water in order for it to be sterile. What does this do to fluoride concentrations? Could you expand a little bit about the whole infant dosage?

[00:13:55]

Marilyn: Well first of all, boiling doesn't... boiling will only concentrate the amount of fluoride in the water. It's extremely hard to get rid of, out of water. Most carbon filters, most filters, carbon filters particularly, is what most people use, won't remove it. The only type of filter that will remove it is reverse osmosis filter, and they can be 5, 600 dollars upwards. With mothers – they have been mislead, because they have been told that it's quite safe to add fluoridated water to infant formula and this is completely wrong. The amount of fluoride in fluoridated water, there is a tiny amount of fluoride in breast milk, It's like .004 parts per million. It's a minute amount. The amount of fluoride in fluoridated water is 250 times the amount of that would be in breast milk. So, nature's actually trying to keep babies *away* from fluoride. But mothers haven't been told this. The American Dental Association in 2006, started warning that if babies were going to be fed with infant formula, reconstituted with tap water, it would be wise to use non-fluoridated tap water.

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Jaya: But we've been told that it's perfectly safe to use. So, it seems to me a little strange that we've been told that it's safe, but it clearly isn't. Have you any thoughts on why they would tell us it's safe, but clearly the science shows otherwise?

[00:15:35]

Merilyn: Australian mothers, the Australian public have been *deliberately* misled by fluoridation promoters, in Australia.

Jaya: Why do you think this is?

Merilyn: Because they do not want to stop water fluoridation and they're putting, deliberately putting children at risk of developing dental fluorosis because they do not want to stop water fluoridation. They want to continue their program.

[00:15:59]

Jaya: In 2007, the National Health and Medical Research Council released a report titled, "A Systematic Review of the Efficacy and Safety of Fluoridation." According to Professor Paul Connett, Emeritus, Professor of Environmental Chemistry, St. Laurence University, USA, the NHMRC report quote: "Is being cited around the fluoridating world as the final word on safety and effectiveness of water fluoridation. However as far as addressing health concerns, a careful reading of this report indicates that at best it is a work of professional incompetence, or at worst an example of scientific fraud in which scientific information is manipulated to support a pre-ordained conclusion," end of quote. These are strong words. It would seem that not all scientists agree that water fluoridation is completely quote, "safe and effective." What are your views, Merilyn on the NHMRC report; and do you believe it addresses all fluoridation health concerns adequately?

[00:17:09]

Merilyn: No, I think it's a piece of garbage actually. I personally told the head of the NHMRC, Warwick Anderson, when he was in Brisbane, a couple of years ago, that it was a really crappy report. I honestly believe that because it was basically based on the York University report of 2000, which was fine. They didn't do any more work on it. They only added in bits on salt fluoridation and milk fluoridation, which is not about water fluoridation. They never once looked at the effect of... the cumulative effect of fluoride on people with kidney impairment and yet, through freedom of information, we know that that was part of the tender that they were required to look at the effect of fluoride on people with a kidney impairment. They didn't do it. There was not a word in the final report. [00:17:59] They also only just barely touched on thyroid effects and that they said that fluoridation did not cause thyroid cancer. They never watched once touched on the effects that fluoride can decrease thyroid activity and they have known this for a hundred years. There's you know, hundreds and hundreds of scientific publications linking fluoride to decreasing thyroid activity, not a word in the NHMRC report.

[00:18:26]

Jaya: So what words of warning would you say to, first of all the viewers, and then secondly perhaps the authorities?

[00:18:35]

Merilyn: Do a proper review. Actually *look* at people. Do the health and safety studies that have never been done. Do it properly. Do it decently.

Jaya: And you're talking about independent studies that have no vested interests involved?

[00:18:52]

Merilyn: Yes. Exactly. This was a privately contracted review and I think it had a pre-ordained result. Even the name of the report, the "safety" and "efficacy" of fluoridation. You know, they never found it was safe and it's certainly not effective.

[00:19:08]

Jaya: And what about words of warning to viewers. What should they be doing to help themselves?

[00:19:13]

Merilyn: Minimize your exposure to fluoride. It's extremely difficult to avoid all exposure, but, um you know drink natural spring water, drink reverse osmosis water. Be careful of what foods would... of what processed foods would have a high liquid content that would contain fluoride. For mothers, make up baby formula with non-fluoridated water. As I said, it's extremely difficult to avoid all contact with it, but you can minimize your exposure. I'd just like to point out one thing. These are fluoride tablets. (Holding up a bottle) They're one quarter of a milligram tablet. They're made by Colgate and they're actually made in the US of A. This is a normal glass of water. It's a quarter litre of water. 250 mls. When you drink a glass of fluoridated water, you are getting one tablet for every glass of water that you drink. If you don't choose to be medicated and they are medicating us though our water, then you have to go and do what you can do to avoid it. We have to outlay a lot of money and expense, you know. If you go to a restaurant, you are having foods prepared with fluoridated water. It's extremely difficult to avoid it, totally.

[00:20:37]

Jaya: Just going into – you've put one tablet in a glass of water, which... what does that work out? They say that what, one part per million, which is 1 milligram per litre?

Merilyn: Yes.

Jaya: So, if people drink say four glasses of water – how much, how much are they actually receiving?

Merilyn: You're receiving four tablets.

Jaya: Which is how much?

Merilyn: A milligram.

Jaya: One milligram.

Merilyn: Yes.

Jaya: So, four glasses you've already got your dose.

Merilyn: Yes. So if you drink two litres of water, you know, you are getting twice the dose. If you drink four litres of water a day, or you have numerous cups of tea or coffee, fruit juice. So many things are made up with fluoridated water. You are getting a much higher dose.

[00:21:21]

Jaya: And this is an accumulative...

Merilyn: Yes. (Jaya: ... Chemical?) It depends on your kidney function. People who are young and healthy. Have healthy kidney function. They can only excrete about 50% of the fluoride that they ingest through their urine. The rest of it accumulates in the bones.

[00:21:39]

Jaya: Why does Dr. Carnie ignore the World Health Organisation's advice that before fluoridation is begun, an estimate be made of the total fluoride dose children are already receiving, and I'll just state that quote: Quote, "Dental and public health administrators should be aware of the total fluoride exposure in the population before introducing any additional fluoride program for caries prevention," unquote. And that's a 1994 WHO recommendation. Could you please answer.

[00:22:14]

Merilyn: They've never done that. They've never done that anywhere in Australia, even though the NHMRC, several years ago, said that that should be done. Fluoride intake studies should be done. It has never been done in Australia anywhere. And they've never done a health risk assessment.

[00:22:31]

Jaya: What would you say to these authorities that are ignoring the recommendations of the World Health Organisation's reports?

Merilyn: Well I feel that they're all criminals actually.

[00:22:40]

Jaya: So what would you... what would you as a scientist say to politicians and maybe other doctors and scientists who haven't got the spine to stand up with you and fight this?

[00:22:51]

Merilyn: Well, it's extremely unscientific for a start, what they have done. And I wonder what the real agenda is, because we know that water fluoridation does cause harm to vulnerable members of the community. We do know that it's not effective. There's only been two adult health surveys ever done in Australia. The first one was 20 years ago. The second one was released a couple of years ago. When you actually go in to the individual state and territory reports that of that adult dental survey, you find and it's basically in the fine print, that the dental health of adults in Queensland, which has only had basically Townsville, Murreeba and Dolby fluoridated, which is less than 5% of the population. They have exactly the same amount of tooth decay. No more than all the adults in all the other states. It hasn't made any difference. It's not effective! When you look at all the children's dental surveys, by the time children are aged 12 years of age. Children in Queensland are just the same as children in the other states. It doesn't make any difference. It is not

effective. There is a small difference, part of that can be explained by tooth delay eruption, which isn't taken into account in dental surveys.

[00:24:15]

Jaya: Ok. One final question. Why has there been no response in 18 years to two recommendations made in 1991 by the NHMRC. The first one being a) That fluoride bone levels be monitored; and b) That the numerous reports of people claiming to be sensitive to fluoride be investigated in a scientific manner? Why has there been no response in 18 years?

[00:24:45]

Merilyn: I believe it's the old, if you don't look you won't find, and they do not want to find verification that people are sensitive to fluoride. They do not want to know the bone fluoride levels of people who've lived in fluoridated areas. Um, that's my belief.

[00:25:04]

Jaya: Have there been any reports done on bone density or what happens to bones with the impact of fluoride?

Merilyn: None, that we can find. Not with the concentration... accumulation of fluoride. There are studies overseas that link hip, increased rates of hip fractures to ingestion of fluoride, over many years. There's also reports of osteosarcoma – bone cancer. There's one very good study that was released a couple of years ago.

[00:25:37]

Jaya: Who by?

Merilyn: Elise Bassin and she was actually a dentist who was doing her, it came from her doctoral study at Harvard University. But what they have done in Australia. They have dismissed this scientific study and the way they have done it is by combining males and females together and then cutting out the age groups that have the highest rates of osteosarcoma. It's actually, you know criminal (laugh) what they have done.

[00:26:09]

Jaya: Professor Vyvian Howard, the University of Ulster in Coleraine, on video on Dr. Paul Connett's website, says that the mother's breast naturally keeps fluoride away from the developing foetus and infant because fluoride is a developmental neurotoxin. Would you agree with Professor Howard?

[00:26:32]

Merilyn: Absolutely. It is a toxin and nature tries to keep fluoride away from babies. That's why it's such a tiny, such a miniscule amount in breast milk. It does cross the blood-brain barrier and, which isn't developed in young infants so, really, we should be keeping... doing everything we possibly can to keep fluoride away from ah foetuses and young infants.

[00:26:57]

Jaya: Marilyn, could you explain to the viewers what dental fluorosis is. Is it just cosmetic?

[00:27:03]

Merilyn: Dental fluorosis forms, happens when children's teeth are forming up in the gum. What happens is the fluoride interferes with the enzymes in the

cells that are actually making enamel and the enamel ends up with less calcium in the enamel that it should do. You have these patches that are hypo-mineralised and that's why they appear white. Later on, because they're more porous, they can become brown, that's stained brown or they can actually flake off. While promoters actually try to say that it's cosmetic, this can have a huge affect on a child's self esteem. It's actually psychological harm to children who have dental fluorosis and there's the last survey that was done. There's very little information on dental fluorosis in Australia. But, there was a survey done in NSW in 2007 and that found that 4 children in every 100 have moderate dental fluorosis. [00:27:59] That means clearly visible dental fluorosis, so those children would be suffering harm. But it's not just the appearance of the teeth. What happens is when you ingest fluoride... dental fluorosis is an indication of harm that's been done to the children before they are 8 years of age. But what's happening all the time is when you're ingesting fluoride, you can't get rid of it – you can only excrete 50% of it, at the best and that means the rest of that fluoride is accumulating in your bones. It's very calcium-seeking and it's stored in your bones. Over a long time it can make bones more brittle. It's also stored in the pineal gland in the brain, which produces melatonin for the day and night cycle.

[00:28:47]

Jaya: So common sense would tell us that if poison is circulating in a child's body and that can actually damage tooth forming cells to make fluorosis, surely other harm is likely?

[00:29:00]

Merilyn: That's exactly right. If you can see it in your teeth that you know that's the your teeth are the 'windows' to the body. What is it doing in the rest of the body?

[00:29:10]

Jaya: So, how would that affect softer tissue organs in the body?

Merilyn: Well it circulates through all your body, through your plasma in your blood. So, it's touching all parts of your body before it finally lodges in your bones and your tendons and your pineal gland. So, what harm is it doing that... doing there we don't know, because there have never been any health safety studies done. We don't know the rates of hip fractures in fluoridated areas compared to non-fluoridated areas in Australia.

[00:29:38]

Jaya: Merilyn, there's been a lot of negatives about fluoride. How can we turn this around and make this into a positive for all that are ingesting fluoride right now? What would you say to professionals, scientists and politicians along with the viewing public? What would you perhaps, how could we make this into something positive?

[00:30:05]

Merilyn: I think there are so many people out there who are now becoming aware of the harm of water fluoridation. They know it doesn't work. They know it's unscientific, but it's difficult for people to stand up. But with this increasing knowledge base, and the ability to get the message out through the Internet. I'd invite people, scientists, doctors, dentists who are aware that

it doesn't work and it's harmful and it's unethical – to have the courage to stand up and speak up against this practice. It belongs 1950's. It belongs to last century. It is so wrong. It's time that it was undone. It is time that it's finished and the one way they can do this is to start with the first step is to sign the Professional Statement. There's over 3000 people now. Scientists, professionals who have signed this Statement on Fluidealert um dot org website. That's the first thing they can do and work towards getting this barbaric outdated practice finished.

[00:31:15]

Jaya: Are there any other websites that you could recommend for particular viewers but also maybe the scientific community to research for themselves?

[00:31:25]

Merilyn: Basically I just say: "Google fluoride." There is so much out there now. You know, look at the positives. Look at well there's really no positives. But just you know, you'll come across the dental associations' websites and fluoride promotion websites, but there's so much information on the harm that fluoride does. But, basically, just Google, "fluoride."

[00:31:46]

Jaya: Is fluoride a nutrient?

Merilyn: (laughter) Absolutely not!... Basically fluoridation isn't science. It's pure marketing and spin.

[00:32:02]