

How the FDA Deceives You About Mercury Amalgams

By Dr. Mercola

Today, we launch the fourth Mercury-Free Dentistry Week. We set aside an entire week dedicated to ending the use of dental amalgam -- a primitive, pre-Civil War, pollutant that leads to cracked teeth -- for three reasons:

1. The new Minamata Convention on [Mercury](#) is the game-changer for dental amalgam. Each nation that signs this comprehensive treaty against mercury pollution – now numbering 100, including the United States – commits itself to scaling down dental mercury without delay.
2. Consumers for Dental Choice, who spearheads the campaign against amalgam, brings the Minamata Convention home. Commissioning a Zogby poll, they issued a scathing indictment of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for covering up amalgam's mercury from American parents and consumers – and for putting the US government out of compliance with the pledge it made at Minamata.
3. Your financial support for Consumers for Dental Choice is now needed. Working with talented environmental, consumer, and health leaders, Consumers for Dental Choice is launching phase out campaigns in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

They have redoubled their efforts in the United States, via a brilliant campaign strategy I discuss below. I put my money where my mouth is: I will match each and every donation made this week, dollar for dollar, up to a total of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

The Game-Changer to Bring Mercury-Free Dentistry to America

Getting amalgam into the complex mercury treaty was no mean feat. With the Minamata negotiations about to begin in Stockholm four years ago, Charlie Brown, leader of Consumers for Dental Choice, invited leaders of environmental, health, dental, and consumer groups to unite under one big tent.

They did, forming the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry -- and elected Charlie as its president. With 11 regional vice presidents and nonprofit groups (NGOs) from dozens of nations, they spanned the globe.

Mercury-free dental groups from North America, Europe, Africa, and Australia joined the coalition, and dentists frequently served as spokespersons during the negotiations sessions. The World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry outworked, outsmarted, and outpointed the corporate-funded World Dental Federation, composed of the American Dental Association and other pro-mercury dental groups.

The Minamata Convention's Annex A includes a mandate to reduce dental mercury use, with the starting date to be now. It provides a road map on how to do so. Any nation may do more – phase out amalgam on a timetable – and Consumers for Dental Choice has begun those campaigns in several nations. With amalgam being in an Annex rather than the main text, a future amendment could result in a world-wide phase-out.

Charlie Brown attended a recent meeting with the US State Department, where a high-ranking official advised him that, after the Minamata Convention was signed, a number of nations were talking about its content.

They expressed surprise that amalgam actually got into the Convention, having expected that special interest groups would succeed in knocking it out. When Charlie diplomatically thanked the State Department, she replied: "Oh no, it wasn't the government that got amalgam into the treaty; it was the NGOs."

We know that activism can work. It worked with Minamata. And now, Minamata is coming home.

A Poll, a Report, and a Stinging Indictment of FDA's Support for Mercury Fillings

So-called "silver fillings" are a massive consumer fraud. Even in the 19th century, respected doctors condemned the term, noting that the term was used to conceal the mercury.

The apologists claim that it refers to the color, but when someone says "silver," they generally mean the metal (the first definition in the dictionary of silver), not the color (the 4th or 5th definition of silver in the dictionary). The term "gold filling" assuredly is not referring to the color; it is referring to the metal.

When consumer fraud occurs in medicine and health, most Americans assume that the FDA would step in to correct the situation. But no, the FDA is on the side of the dental industry, which wants you to believe that amalgam fillings are silver, not mercury.

Even the word "amalgam" is ambiguous. It can mean a metal with mercury or it can mean a metal without mercury. According to the Zogby poll, which Consumers for Dental Choice commissioned, Americans are grossly misled by the words "silver fillings" and "amalgam."

57 Percent of Americans Do Not Know Amalgam Contains Mercury

Consumers for Dental Choice commissioned a poll with the highly reputable and accurate Zogby Analytics firm. The results may not surprise our readers: fewer than half (43 percent) of Americans could name mercury as amalgam's main component. Fully 57 percent gave an incorrect answer or did not know amalgam contained mercury.

Why is that? First, dentists generally are not telling them. Only 11 percent ever recall being told by their dentist that amalgam has mercury. Second, the term "silver fillings" is a consumer fraud if there ever was one. Indeed, a quarter of the respondents named silver as amalgam's main component. Consumers are upset that the government lets this market deception continue, and call for enforcement action to stop amalgam as being marketed as "silver."

With findings supported by five national organizations from fields of consumer protection, health, environment, and minority advocacy, Consumers for Dental Choice has issued a new report, *Measurably Misleading*,¹ which explains the poll results and reveals how the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the dental industry deceive you about mercury.

People have an absolute right to know that amalgam fillings contain mercury—even if they ultimately chose to get one. But mercury is going into people's mouths because the dental industry is *hiding* the fact that amalgam contains mercury. While this survey does not let silent dentists off the hook, it identifies the lead culprit: the FDA.

Why? Because FDA is the nation's regulator of devices. FDA exists to protect us from deceptive practices, false labeling, misleading labeling, and other marketing deception in healthcare. FDA's own rules say that mislabeling occurs for "incorrect, inadequate, or incomplete identification." The FDA could act to inform consumers about mercury dental fillings, but they don't. Instead, the FDA calls amalgam "silver fillings" on its own website. It's time for the FDA to stop misleading and start leading. FDA must say the "M" word, Mercury -- and ensure that every parent and every consumer walking into a dental office knows that amalgam fillings are really mercury fillings.

Sure, things have improved. When Charlie began with Consumers for Dental Choice, only three percent of dentists were mercury-free. Charlie's organization has been instrumental in catalyzing change in the industry. Today, more than 50 percent of dentists in America have stopped using mercury fillings. That's major progress. But we still have a long way to go to end this archaic practice of putting mercury in people's teeth. Unfortunately, we seem to have stalled out at around 50 percent of dentists who still insist on using amalgam.

"We think the pro-mercury dentists have stabilized because they won't learn anything new and the profits are so easy," Charlie says.

"They are concealing from the patients that amalgam is a mercury filling. The enabler of pro-mercury dentistry or of dental mercury is the FDA. The FDA says to dentists and says to the manufacturers, 'You may conceal the mercury from patients. You don't need to tell them,' and of course, therefore they don't."

We have a great team with a great achievement. Help us keep them going.

Why Is FDA Refusing to Act Against Dental Mercury?

Why exactly is the FDA so opposed to informing the public about the true nature of amalgam? The answer is simple: because the agency has been penetrated through the revolving door that's

so common in other industries. Just like Monsanto has penetrated the federal government's regulatory agencies, amalgam profit centers have penetrated and effectively lobbied the FDA to remain complacent on this issue.

"It's top-end bureaucracy," Charlie explains. "At the top is the revolving door of people coming in from the outside corporate world, serving a little while, not running the agency, just having the title, and then going back into the corporate world. That's one group. At the staff level is a permanent bureaucracy, which is impermeable. They don't listen to anybody. It's a great job.

They do what they want. They aren't supervised by the revolving door leadership. In this case, the FDA bureaucracy is very pro-amalgam. Incredibly, the dental decisions are not made by toxicologists. Mercury is a horrible neurotoxin. It can and does damage the brains of developing children permanently, and yet they have a dentist in charge of this issue, a dentist who likes amalgam."

There's also a demographic concern when it comes to information distribution. Charlie has found that people who make 50,000 dollars a year or less (according to the commissioned Zogby poll) are three times less likely to learn about the mercury issue from their dentists than people who make over 50,000 dollars a year. The same trend is found among racial lines, with African-Americans and other minorities being less likely to get the truth from their dentists. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has called on the Indian Health Service (HIS) to stop using amalgam on Indian reservations. So people are starting to wake up and push back. *"That's what we got to do. It can work and it will work,"* Charlie says.

Resources to Help You Find a Biological Dentist

The following organizations can help you to find a mercury-free, biological dentist:

- [Consumers for Dental Choice](#)
- [International Academy of Biological Dentistry & Medicine \(IABDM\)](#)
- [Dental Amalgam Mercury Solutions \(DAMS\)](#) E-mail them at: dams@usfamily.net or call 651-644-4572 for an information packet
- [Holistic Dental Association](#)
- [International Association of Mercury Safe Dentists](#)

Together, Let's Help Charlie Brown and Consumers for Dental Choice Get to the Finish Line

This is the week we can get Consumers for Dental Choice the funding it deserves. I have found few NGOs as effective, and none as efficient, as Consumers for Dental Choice. Its small team has led the charge on six continents -- including ours!

So I am stepping up with the challenge. For the fourth year in a row, I will match the funds you give. In 2012 the match was up to \$50,000 -- and you did it! In 2013, I upped the ante to \$75,000 -- and you did it again! This year, I believe a \$100,000 match is the right thing to do. Please give,

and all dollars received up to \$100,000 will be matched by Natural Health Research Foundation, which I founded.