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Fluoridation critics should not ignore science

Re: **Fluoride foes say proposed question is biased — March 10**

Many who spoke at the public meeting about the wording of the fluoridation question wanted it to state that we fluoridate our water by adding hydrofluorosilicic acid (HFSA). But that would be misleading, because no hydrofluorosilicic acid comes out of Waterloo taps.

When hydrofluorosilicic acid is added to water it decomposes completely within minutes to fluoride ion and an innocuous silicon compound found in bone. (See, for example, a report in the peer reviewed *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, Volume 57, Issue 5, August 2000, pages 597-637.) To refuse to ingest water that contains fluoride generated from HFSA would be like refusing to ingest table salt just because it can be made from caustic soda (lye) and muriatic acid.

A further concern at the meeting, that trace amounts of heavy metals are sometimes present in hydrofluorosilicic acid, is also misplaced. An April 2008 information sheet prepared by Region of Waterloo Public Health, which was distributed at the meeting, states that arsenic and lead "are not detectable in City of Waterloo water, after the addition of fluoride."

I have not decided how I will vote on the fluoridation question. There are important issues. But I hope that we will not hear any more misleading statements that ignore basic science. I urge those who participate in this debate to accept what is scientifically known and focus on real issues.

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