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Ingesting fluoride should be an individual choice

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In his letter to the editor published Sept. 22, Dr. Harry Hoediono, President-elect of the Ontario Dental Association, contends that the fluoridation debate is over.

“Our position is firm,” he wrote. “Community water fluoridation, in the right amount, is both safe and effective. It’s not a debate — it is a fact.”

Dr. Hoediono, however, is telling only half-truths about both the safety and effectiveness of any fluoride that he asks people to swallow along with their drinking water.

Fluoride is not entirely safe, nor does it have only one effect.

Fluoride certainly does things in the human body, and these effects involve varying degrees of risk.

I am not opposed to the topical application or use of fluoride as toothpaste or rinse for most people.

This use can be monitored closely; usage in these circumstances is indeed a personal health decision based on personal reaction.

Any fluoride product you swallow is going to have effects — side-effects. These effects are not necessarily observed in the short term or at a young age.

Take the advice printed on the containers from the other health professionals, “Do Not Swallow This Product.”

This warning is a requirement and it is placed there for good reason.

Dr. Hoediono is an expert in oral health. His expertise, like that of his fellow dentists, does not extend beyond the oral cavity.

Their training is not in internal medicine. How long did it take for that profession to realize the dangers of mercury fillings?

As a group, they suffer from the illusion of confidence.

They are not competent to discuss internal medicine, especially how an individual's system responds to a drug.

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