

*Note; Osteosarcoma (bone cancer) was connected to fluoridated water*

***For Immediate Release: June 6, 2005***

***Contact: EWG Public Affairs, 202-667-6982***

## **Government Asked to Evaluate the Cancer-Causing Potential Of Fluoride in Tap Water**

### **EWG Cites Compelling Body of Science Linking Fluoride to Rare Bone Cancer in Boys**

WASHINGTON Citing a strong body of peer-reviewed evidence, Environmental Working Group (EWG) today asked the National Toxicology Program (NTP) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to list fluoride in tap water in its authoritative Report on Carcinogens, based on its ability to cause a rare form of childhood bone cancer, osteosarcoma, in boys. The Report on Carcinogens lists only substances that are known or reasonably anticipated to cause cancer in humans.

In recent years, concerns have grown about the safety of fluoride in tap water. In 2002, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) commissioned a study by the National Research Council (NRC) on the overall safety of fluoride in tap water. The final report is expected by February 2006. The NRC, however, does not have the expertise or the mandate to determine the carcinogenicity of fluoride.

EWG recognizes the value of fluoride to dentistry, yet a substantial and growing body of peer-reviewed science strongly suggests that adding fluoride to tap water is not the safest way to achieve the dental health benefits of fluoridation.

Nationwide about 170 million people live in communities with fluoridated water. Adding fluoride to tap water can be a contentious issue. There are ongoing fights over fluoridation in Colorado, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, California, Massachusetts and Nebraska. States with recent battles over fluoridation include New Hampshire, Virginia, Florida, Arkansas and Tennessee.

Research dating back decades, much of it government funded, has long suggested that fluoride added to drinking water presents a unique cancer risk to the growing bones of young boys. New epidemiology

provides strong evidence of a link between exposure to fluoride in tap water during the mid-childhood growth spurt between ages 6 and 10, and bone cancer in adolescence. Additional science strongly suggests that fluoride can cause genetic mutations in bone cells directly related to childhood bone cancer.

"We recognize the potential benefits of fluoride to dental health, but there is very compelling evidence that fluoride in tap water can cause bone cancer in boys," said EWG Senior Vice President Richard Wiles. "The government needs to assess the overall strength of the evidence and make a determination of fluoride's cancer-causing potential," Wiles added.

EWG's letter to the NTP and related materials can be found at <http://www.ewg.org/issues/fluoride/20050606/petition.php>

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*Environmental Working Group is a nonprofit research organization based in Washington, D.C., that uses the power of information to protect human health and the environment.*