

# Annual Mercury Awareness Week Update

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#) ✓ Fact Checked

## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › For the 11th year in a row, we celebrate our annual Mercury Awareness and Mercury-Free Dentistry Week. We focus on the need for all of us to receive mercury-free dentistry – no amalgam fillings! – and shift national and international policies accordingly. The leader of this campaign is Consumers for Dental Choice, led by Charlie Brown
- › All this week, September 5 to 11, 2021, I put my money where my mouth is, matching your gift to Consumers for Dental Choice, up to a total of \$150,000
- › Launching a full-court press in 2018, Consumers for Dental Choice convinced the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to break its silence and to recommend against amalgam use for well over 100,000,000 Americans
- › The FDA specifically, since September 2020, recommends against dental amalgam for children or women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or planning to become pregnant in the future, or anyone who has a sensitivity to mercury, have kidney problems or neurological disease, as it poses a risk to their health
- › Consumers for Dental Choice founded the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, a coalition of nonprofit groups from all over the world dedicated to ending the use of amalgam worldwide. The World Alliance had spectacular success in Europe. In 2020, the European Commission recommended that the European Parliament and European Council phase out all amalgam use in the 27-nation European Union. Italy has already begun a full phase-out of amalgam

For the 11th consecutive year, we celebrate our annual Mercury Awareness and Mercury-Free Dentistry Week. With us again is Charlie Brown, executive director of Consumers for Dental Choice, and a former attorney general for West Virginia.

As in previous years, during this week we will double your donations to Consumers for Dental Choice, matching it dollar for dollar up to \$150,000. I'm committed to doing this annual fundraiser because eliminating dental mercury is such an important effort for both human and environmental health.

*"Huge numbers of people worldwide ... die directly from pollution, toxins in the air, toxins in our body. And one of the huge culprits since the Civil War has been dentistry, the dentists who continue to put mercury in the mouth,"* Brown says.

Getting mercury out of dentistry has turned out to be a long, hard battle, but Brown perseveres, and thanks to his diligence and networking skills, he's been able to really move the ball forward.

## **More Dentists Than Ever Shun Amalgam**

Fortunately, there have been brave forerunners who shunned amalgam early on, and these dentists have paved the way toward a healthier profession and safer dental treatment. When Brown first started this fight, only 3% of dentists were mercury-free, and they were told to keep their mouths shut about the dangers of dental mercury (amalgam).

*"That's how I got into this, being their lawyer and raising their constitutional right to tell the truth to patients,"* Brown says. *"The American Dental Association intentionally called them silver fillings, because [they wanted patients to think] gold fillings are made of gold so silver fillings must be made of silver.*

*The dental boards enforced it with its gag rule, so very few dentists would speak out. Some of them were shut down for speaking out. Some evaded it, but had to fight. And so, the early dentists couldn't talk much about it. And those that did could get punished and the FDA was absolutely silent.*

*The state dental board is supposed to protect you [the patient], not the dentist, and the American Dental Association was supposed to represent the profession, but it really just represents products in the way it advocates for them and advocates for the status quo and the FDA.*

*The dental schools were no help then. They simply weren't teaching advanced dentistry. They were teaching amalgam, drill, fill and bill. So, it was a huge barrier to get past. The word mercury was never used. Now, it's used all the time. It's used in state laws. There's a whole treaty about mercury and amalgam is in that treaty.*

*So the awareness now is much greater than it was, and we want to make sure it's universal. Then we've got to circle back to these bureaucracies in dental clinics and insurance companies that try to hold the line and want amalgam to exist for yet another generation."*

## **Important Health Information**

While removing amalgam can be a direct boon to your health, it's crucial to have it done by a biological dentist who understands the risks and can do it safely. When I had mine removed, the dentist I used was beyond clueless, and I suffered liver damage as a result of the toxic dumping that occurred.

A great resource if you're looking for a biological dentist trained in the safe removal of amalgam is [ToxicTeeth.org's Find a Dentist page](https://www.toxicteeth.org). There you can search for a qualified dentist by country/state, as well as by service and/or mercury-free dental association. Other excellent sources include [IABDM.org](https://www.iabdm.org) and [holisticdental.org](https://www.holisticdental.org). You can also contact Brown via email, at [Charlie@toxicteeth.org](mailto:Charlie@toxicteeth.org).

*"We certainly welcome inquiries because people do need to find the right dentist," Brown says. "The dentist that put in this amalgam are never the ones to take it out. You want to go to a trained dentist that is so fearful of its toxicity that they never put it in. And when they take it out, they're very careful.*

*And [amalgam fillings] shouldn't come out of everybody. There has to be a medical evaluation to determine how dangerous it is coming out and how to make sure that the exposure is minimized when it is taken out."*

On an important side note, it's worth remembering that cavities are a direct result of a poor diet, so the best preventive strategy you have is to eat traditional, real foods, not a Western processed food diet. Ideally, you would educate your children and grandchildren and teach them to make good choices so that they don't have to have any dental decay, because it's really not necessary.

## **Progress Update for the United States**

After Consumers for Dental Choice launched a no-holds-barred campaign at the start of 2018, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration was persuaded to break its silence and to update its recommendation on amalgam in September 2020.

The reality for the U.S. government at that point was that it was behind the rest of the world. In 2010, Brown was elected president of the newly-created World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, which succeeded over the next three years in persuading the Minamata Convention to include amalgam reduction as a treaty goal. In 2013, the U.S. became the first nation in the world to ratify the Minamata Convention and, with 50 ratifiers, the treaty became legally binding in 2017.

Immediately, the World Alliance, under Brown's leadership, launched campaigns across the world and created regional centers for environmental health in Asia, then Africa, then Latin America, then Europe.

With this track record of success creating pressure on the U.S. to catch up, in 2018, Consumers for Dental Choice put together the Chicago Declaration to End Dental Industry Mercury Use, and created a public petition for the FDA to ban amalgam for children. More than 80,000 Americans have now signed that petition. At that point, Brown was finally able to secure a meeting with top FDA officials.

In November 2019, the FDA convened a scientific advisory committee to evaluate the evidence and advise the agency on a recommendation, and in September, 2020, they unveiled FDA's new recommendation, which states that children and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or planning to become pregnant in the future, and anyone who has a sensitivity to mercury, kidney problems or neurological disease, should avoid amalgam, as it poses a risk to their health. As explained by Brown:

*"Americans and Canadians sometimes say, 'How come you're helping all over the place [and not here]?' and the answer is that it circles back. When we met with the Director for the Center for Devices in 2018, it was to show what the European Union had done.*

*[The EU] had banned amalgam for children under 15, pregnant women and breastfeeding women. The European Union was so far ahead of the United States in protecting people from amalgam. They realized they had to act. The European Union acted because of our campaign. We've got a campaign there since 2011 ... Italy, this past year, phased out amalgam. They're the biggest country in Europe to do that.*

*Some of the smaller ones like Moldova, Sweden, Norway, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland, Ireland, all those had done it, but Italy's a major country in the European Union and the first Mediterranean nation to end amalgam. So, these kinds of steps reverberate, because if [amalgam is] not safe in Italy, it's not safe here either."*

## **US Goals and Campaigns**

To keep the ball moving up the court, Brown has now put together a new team that, as of January 2021, has been working with the U.S. federal government to eliminate amalgam from federal dental programs for government employees, Native American and Alaska Native children, prisoners, military personnel and Medicaid recipients.

*"We're not going to let a two-tier system emerge where it's mercury-free for those in the middle-class and mercury for those that often get left behind.*

*They're not going to get left behind with our movement. We are empowering people ...*

*We have a great team. We put this team together, brick by brick over the years, and we have the energy to win. And we have a single mission, our organization. That's why we hope people will donate. We are a single mission organization to end amalgam.*

*And by that focus, and the experience that I bring, we're here in Washington, DC. We're here where the government is, where we can exert the most pressure and the most efficient pressure. We are efficient. We are effective. We have a track record, but we need the help of the American and Canadian public to see this through," Brown says.*

The 2021 campaign also focuses on changing American dental schools. While some have already ceased using dental restoration with amalgam in their dental school clinics, others have not. It's high time for dental schools to abandon this ancient and toxic relic.

## **Progress Update for Europe**

In 2020, the European Commission decided to recommend that the European Parliament and the European Council phase out the use of amalgam for everyone – a crucial step toward a total ban in the European Union's labyrinthine regulatory system.

If the Parliament and the Council act on the recommendation, this decision will affect 27 countries, which is a significant win. As mentioned, some countries have jumped toward the front of the line, like Italy, but there are many more to come. The Commission must now propose legislation to the Parliament, which is scheduled to take place in 2022.

*"We're optimistic because we've had success in the Parliament, but it's a complicated battle," Brown says. "This past year, we issued the Bonn Declaration for Mercury-Free Dentistry for Germany [with more than 50 German organizations signing on]. That's had a huge impact.*

*In fact, the leading newspaper in Germany, the Frankfurt Paper, wrote a story with the headline, 'Amalgam Aus,' or 'Amalgam Out.' They said amalgam is the brown coal of dentistry. It's just got to go, in other words. You just can't do this anymore. So, we're seeing that kind of progress in Europe."*

## **Update on the Minamata Convention**

As mentioned, amalgam is also part of an international treaty, called the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which is supervised by the United Nations Environmental Program. It became a legally binding treaty in 2017, once ratified by 50 countries. At present, about 130 countries have ratified this mercury treaty, which seeks to phase down and ultimately eliminate mercury pollution.

*"Our battle in 2022 will be at that conference when they reconvene," Brown says. "I lead the international campaign. I'm the president of the World Alliance for Mercury-free Dentistry. We have regional centers we've created to make sure this campaign's going everywhere ..."*

*We could not have put together the World Alliance for Mercury-free Dentistry; we could not put together our multifaceted U.S. campaign without you being our chief funder. And we're grateful that you will match the funds of the donors during the Mercury Awareness Week ..."*

*The Minamata convention convenes every year or two. They'll convene 2022 in Indonesia. And there is an amendment proposed by the entire African region, for all countries in Africa to phase out amalgam.*

*The European Union has also proposed phasing out and ending it on a certain date for children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. So, we have two great proposals to shift the focus of amalgam from phasing down [in certain countries] ... [to] phasing it out for everybody, and that's going to be the titanic battle."*

# Progress Report for Developing Countries

The entire continent of Africa is now onboard with phasing out amalgam. In Tanzania, guidelines for a three-year phase-out were issued in 2020. They are now two years into the process of phasing out dental mercury for children of all ages and women of childbearing age.

*"The mission is something we can finish. We're ready to win here. We're ready to win in Europe. We're ready to win in the Minamata Convention, a conference that convenes next year in Indonesia." ~ Charlie Brown*

Tanzania's success demonstrates that it's not a matter of economy. Before the pandemic, the per capita income of Tanzania was \$995 per year. The fact that they can make this transition proves it's not "too expensive" to quit amalgam. It's a question of willpower.

*"All those people I've met with over years, they want to end amalgam. They're not like the American and Canadian group, which is just tied into the money and the protectionism and the insurance and all the cash flows. They want to help their people.*

*So, when you get outside of the west, actually the barriers are probably fewer. You'd think there would be more. No, they're fewer, but we're breaking down the barriers right here too in the good old USA. You've helped do that, and we hope everybody listening will at least consider helping us," Brown says.*

## Call to Action: Help Us End Toxic Mercury in Dentistry

The first time I met Brown was in Schaumburg, Illinois, at a dinner party. He'd flown in and was staying at a hotel about 2 miles from the restaurant. He didn't even take a cab, but walked the whole way, because he didn't want to waste the organization's funds. That, to me, demonstrated a level of commitment and fiscal responsibility that is hard to match, and I've been a financial supporter of Consumers for Dental Choice since.



It's easy to be frivolous with donations, but Consumers for Dental Choice is not. Every penny goes to further the cause. When you donate to Brown's organization, you can feel secure knowing your money is making a dent in the world for good, to protect people everywhere from this pernicious and pervasive neurological toxin. This week, I will match all donations, dollar for dollar up to \$150,000.

**Yes, I Want to Make a Difference!**

*"The mission is something we can finish," Brown says. "It's single purpose. We've got the team. I do have the experience as a lawyer and former state attorney general. And I've got tremendous people we work with around the United States, in Canada, in the Americas, around the world.*

*They're committed people. We had to build this team brick by brick, but we built it and we're ready to go. We're ready to win here. We're ready to win in Europe. We're ready to win in the Minamata Convention, a conference that convenes next year in Indonesia."*