Episode 183: Fluoride: The Hidden Cause of Acne (& What to Do About It)
Child: Welcome to my Mommy’s podcast.

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Katie: Okay. Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I’m Katie from wellnessmama.com. And today’s episode is going to answer a question I get a lot from you guys and have not even made time to write about specifically yet. And that is Fluoride and what it does to our bodies. And I am here with Melissa Gallico who’s the author of "The Hidden Cause of Acne" and "F is for Fluorite: A Feasible Fairytale for Free Thinkers 15 and up." She’s also no rookie when it comes to research. She’s a former military intelligence officer, a Fulbright Scholar, an FBI Intelligence Analyst, and she has instructed classes for the FBI Intelligence analyst at Quantico, and provided intelligence support for National Security Investigations. She graduated with honors from Georgetown and has a masters from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. She's obviously well-educated, well-traveled and well-researched and I cannot wait to jump in. So, Melissa welcome and thanks for being here.

Melissa: Thanks so much for having me, Katie.

Katie: Like I said, I cannot wait to jump in, and I also should say I have had a lot of people on this podcast, and I think your bio may be one of the most impressive. That is a lot of things in one bio, and I love that you have obviously a very analytical and research-based background. I think that could be really important since we’re gonna go deep on a topic that is pretty controversial which is, fluoride. So, to start off, I love to just talk about fluoride in general. Like I said, it’s a controversial topic, but I’d love if you could start with just explaining what it is and when and why it's used.

Melissa: Sure. So, most of us know fluoride as a dental treatment. And that’s always how I look at it as well. I
use fluoride in my toothpaste, and I would get fluoride at dental treatments when I saw the dentist twice a year. And I didn't really think much about it. I didn't learn until later when I discovered my sensitivity to it that the controversy really does go very deep. And the other side of the story is that fluoride is also a common air pollutant. We don't realize this now because there are a lot of restrictions about fluoride and how it can be emitted into the atmosphere. But back in the 1930s and the 40s when they first started studying fluoride as a potential dental treatment, that is when they were having a lot of trouble with fluoride as an air pollutant.

And they were getting lawsuits from coast to coast, and it's very common with aluminum smelter, and brick and tile manufacturers, anything that deals with mining operations. So, fluoride is a common element in the earth's crust and whenever you're mining and tearing apart rock, you're basically going to have fluoride as a byproduct. So, not only did they have this byproduct because they didn't have anything to do with it, but they were also liable for lawsuits from people that were noticing problems not just with their personal health, but with agriculture. Tens of thousands of acres were ruined, because of fluoride pollution in the early 20th Century. So, that's the other side of the story is the pollution story that you don't often hear when you just think of fluoride as a dental treatment.

Katie: Interesting. Yeah, I have researched fluoride pretty heavily and I know that that's not one of the more common things that comes up, and obviously it is more well-known in the dental world. So I'm curious before we move on if you have any research from what you found on, is it actually effective in a dental capacity? And if so, should we actually be ingesting it? Or what is its mechanism that's effective if any?

Melissa: So they started adding it to the water supply. In the mid-40s was when they did the first trial. And by 1950 they said, "Yes. This is great. We should all add it to our water. And the reason was because they thought that it prevented dental decay. And over the years that has changed. And now it's supposedly more of a topical application that is effective in preventing dental decay not so much ingesting it, so there's a lot of wasted fluoride, and a lot of people who are exposed to fluoride that don't really need it because their teeth are already formed. So, there's a lot of controversy on how effective it is when you're consuming it in the water supply. And a lot of dentists think it's more of a topical effectiveness. For me personally, since I'm so sensitive to it and all the research I've done I don't rely on fluoride at all for my dental care. I think nutrition is a much more important factor. I know you go to that through that in-depth on your site. So personally, I don't think it's effective, but in the dentistry world, of course, there's a lot of different opinions on that.

Katie: For sure. That's what I found in researching as well in that, I actually have a really close friend who's a dentist, and he said there is some research it could definitely be argued both ways as far as if it's effective in the mouth on teeth directly, I'm like you avoid it completely because I'm sensitive, but as far as consuming it and ingesting it, he's like that would kind of be the equivalent of eating Band-Aids because you have a cut, like it works topically that doesn't mean you need to eat it. So that's kind of the way I look at it. But for me at least coming from having Hashimoto's and thyroid issues, I really don't handle fluoride well, and I know that you said you don't handle it well either. But you've written in-depth about this, and one of the problems it's linked to is acne from what you've found. So, can you walk us through how you came to the conclusion that Fluoride is linked to acne?

Melissa: Sure. So, this is what made me interested in Fluoride was because through my job and through school, I studied abroad and I lived abroad in a lot of different places. And I noticed that my skin was effortlessly clear, and several countries, Senegal, Tunisia, Scotland, the Caribbean. And then as soon as I came back to United States, even if it was just for like a week-long visit I would start to get acne again, but really
painful cystic acne that was really stubborn cysts that form around your jaw line around your mouth, and ultimately I had it like all over my face, and my neck, my chin, my back. So, it was pretty extreme. And this went on for almost two decades just of moving back and forth. And every time I lived abroad, I thought, "Oh, I must have figured it out." Or, you know, this last time it was in Scotland when I did my year as a Fulbrighter, and it was completely clear, I was in my 30s and I thought, "Okay. I think I've finally outgrown acne." Then I returned to the states and it was worse than ever.

So that's when I thought, "Okay, there's something causing my acne that I'm being exposed to here in the states that I'm not exposed to in these other places I've lived." And first I thought maybe lead, because that's, you know, a toxin that you think about. I knew it was the water, because I could even kind of feel it when I washed my face, like it didn't feel clean, I felt like it left the sheen on my face, like I was having a reaction to it. So I thought it was lead, then I thought maybe something in the pipes, like copper piping, and then I thought, you know, maybe it's the fluoride. And I had read a few journal articles that said, "Topical fluoride can cause acne." And there's a lot of case studies about that.

So I had cut out toothpaste, and I stopped drinking tea which is another source of Fluoride. So I didn't think that I was being exposed to fluoride outside of the water. So I decided I would test it through just switching my water source and see if my skin cleared up. And I saw a major improvement. It didn't completely go away, but I saw a major improvement. So I thought, "Okay. Maybe this is one of the factors in my acne." And then I started to realize fluoride is in a lot of other things besides water. And as I eliminated those sources, it was kind of trial and error, I'd get a big flare up on my skin, and then I would do the research and find out that something I had eaten that day or prior 24 hours it's about how long it takes for that reaction to develop was high in fluoride. And when I finally figured out all the main fluoride sources in my diet, my skin was perfectly clear just like it was when I lived abroad.

So, I started writing about this online, and I was made is that the people that I contacted who said that they had the same condition, you know, they were like, "You know, thanks for writing about that. I never would have thought about it." But I stopped consuming these things, and I stopped using Fluoride at toothpaste and my skin cleared up. So, I thought there must be a lot of us, you know, there's people who are allergic to everything these days, you know, so I thought, "I'll write this free little PDF guide and put it on the Internet of just how to clear acne if you happen to have this weird fluoride allergy. And I was really shocked at the amount of people I heard from. One woman wrote to me and said, "Your book saved my life. I never would have figured this out." And that's when I thought I need to make a proper book, put it on Amazon so people can see it. So I did the self-publish book, and then all of these reviews people, that had acne for 30 years, and it was really when I was researching for that big book that I realized this isn't just me, this isn't just a few people with a weird allergy, it's actually very common, and it's just not diagnosed because most people don't know how fluoride has infiltrated the food supply.

Katie: Yeah. That's a good point. I think you're right. It's easy for most people to realize in the dental world, and most people, maybe you're aware that it's in our water supply, but we don't think about the fact that obviously our water supply is used in creating our food supply, or if you drink water anywhere but home it's still the water supply even if you're filtering at home. But I feel like this is so reminiscent of my story. Like when we have our own struggle, we're obviously the most-motivated to figure out how to fix it. And for me that was the case too. It took me years of research and talking to doctors and finding a doctor who would work with me to find my own health answers. And it sounds like this was yours as well, but I'm really curious, why don't you think that a dermatologist have figured this out yet?
Because obviously, they must have people coming in all the time with acne, and they wanna be able to give them a solution. Why do you think that maybe the conventional world is not connecting these dots yet?

Melissa: Well, I used to think that they hadn't figured it out. But right now I'm reading a book by George Walbard who was the world famous allergist back in the mid-20th Century. And he's writing about Skinner Options from fluoride, chronic fluoride intoxication, which is exactly what I have. So, I am not the first person to figure it out. There's definitely been others. And his book is called, "Struggle with Tigans" And he talks about how his research was suppressed, and how his name was disparaged, and how he just could not get, you know, the recognition that this problem needed even though he tried so hard for so many years to really raise the red flag about fluoride.

But dermatologists haven't looked at it because they tend to focus on pills and creams and treatments that can be administered. Whereas, fluoride is just, you know, reducing it in your diet. There's really not a lot of money in that. And Johns Hopkins did a study in 2002 and they looked at all the literature on acne from the second half of the 20th Century and they found that 99.6% of all the published studies failed to even mention diet let alone actually study it as the root cause of acne. So, they've gotten a little bit better with that recently, and mostly it's thanks to the paleo movement, those doctors who are really interested in Paleo have started to study diet more as a cause of acne, and they've been able to get funding for those studies through like the National Meat industry training Council of Australia has funded studies about the Paleo diet and acne. So, they're making progress looking at diet more, but Fluoride is just so invisible and it's so insidious. You won't see it on any labels, and it's really off the radar. So I think that's why they haven't noticed it yet. But I hope now that this book is out, and more people are recognizing that they have this condition that there will eventually be more studies and it'll be more well-known.

Katie: Yeah. I'm hopeful of that as well. And you mentioned this other book that you're reading that he was looking at fluoride in skin inflammation or eruptions. I'm curious. Is there any link that you know of between fluoride and other skin problems besides just acne? I hear from a lot of moms who have kids with Eczema, or women struggling with psoriasis. I'm curious if there's any potential connection there as well.

Melissa: There are. He writes about hives, and he just generally calls it like skin dermatitis. He doesn't even use the word acne. So back then, he says in the book that the really the only predictable thing about how a body will react to fluoride is that it will be unpredictable. So everyone is reacting differently. Skin reactions are really just one of the many reactions that he studied. He studied a lot of gastrointestinal problems, respiratory problems. He found fluoride in just randomest places, you know, the lenses of the eye. Certain people with their kidney stones. You know, and it wasn't like every kidney stone was high in fluoride, it was just certain ones. So he was just at the very beginning of figuring out how fluoride affects the body and we still haven't figured that out yet.

Katie: That is so interesting. And it reminds me of early in my journey trying to figure out in being a teenager, I had acne and other skin issues, and I remember going to the dermatologist and then being told I just had dermatitis, which just means inflammation of the skin and wanting to know, "Okay. But why? Why do I have that?" Because it's not a deficiency of fake hormones from birth control pills which I wasn't gonna take. Like, "What is actually causing this?" And I feel like that is something I'm really hoping like you to see more and more of in the research as we move forward. Now we have the ability to research so many things is what's the actual root cause of this? Versus just like what can we treat it with? And that's really fascinating that you said
that about other types of skin inflammation, because I've always said coming from the nutrition side, the skin really is a window into our body. And if you have any kind of inflammation of the skin or issue of the skin, that's something to pay attention to because it's a sign of something going on internally whether it be maybe liver-related or histamine-related or in this case, fluoride-related. Something you either need to probably add in or take out.

And so, I think I'm so glad that you're raising awareness about this, because like I said, I think Fluoride is one of those really controversial ones, that sometimes even I feel like if you try to question, you get labeled like anti-science or that you don't believe in the research, because it has this one potential benefit in dentistry. That it's one of the things we're not allowed to question. Have you run into that at all with people getting angry at you for potentially saying that Flouride is not helpful?

Melissa: Not too much. You know, a few comments on Twitter here and there that I've just kind of scrolled right past, but I do think it is a big problem just the stigma that's been going along with it. But when you're talking about your own body like people that know me know I am an analytic thinker, like that's what I do for a living. That's how I've been trained. I didn't come at this conclusion lightly, you know, within even a week or a month or a year. You know, this has been several years that I have been writing about this and speaking about it.

So, I don't really...people don't seem to question me that much to my face, I guess. But maybe behind my back they're saying that I'm crazy. But I think when you're talking about something so personal and you see the pictures, it's like you can see what my face looked like before. And the reaction is so fast, like within 24 hours that this is easy for people to test out for themselves. So, and I'm not trying to sell filters or anything like that. So, I think when they look at all of that, it kind of puts things in perspective a little bit more. And then also when they realize this history of fluoride as a pollutant, it gives a new light to the whole controversy.

Katie: I agree. Okay. So, let's go through indepth. If someone has acne or struggle with acne or any skin problem for a long time and is wondering if this might be one of the keys to a solution for them, what do they need to look for? What are some of the most common sources of Fluoride exposure? I know we talked about the dental world, and it's in some water supplies, but what else?

Melissa: Well, the first thing you need to cut out is the toothpaste. Sometimes that's the main culprit like I just heard from a woman on Instagram who stopped using Fluoride with toothpaste, and a week later, her skin had cleared up. She didn't have any more active cysts, and then within a month it was beautiful. So, sometimes it's as easy as that. And then the next thing is the water. And not just the drinking water, but everything made with drinking water. So, ready-to-make, you know, ready-to-drink soft drinks and things like that. Pasta, rice, even cereal that's been processed with Fluoridated water, the way it's made, the Fluoride will concentrate in the cereals. So that's one to look out for that you wouldn't intuitively think of. And fluoride is also a common pesticide mostly used in California on raisins and grape crops.

So any juice made with grape juice, even if it's not Fluoridated water, you know, say it's from concentrate and it's not Fluoridated water, it could still be very high-end fluoride. They did a test of several different grape juice brands and they found that Gerber white grape juice was 6.8 parts per million. That was the highest. And the limit for Fluoridated water is four parts per million. So that really is quite high. Wine, the same thing. But it's just wine from this one part of California where they grow all the raisins. So it's wine from San Joaquin Valley in California is where they use this pesticide, this fluoride-based pesticide. And then the other big
sources are poultry products. So when you consume fluoride, it bio accumulates in your bones, and then National Academy of Sciences estimates that the half-life of fluoride is 20 years. So, the amount of fluoride that is sequestered in your bones today, half of it will still be there 20 years from now. And that's why, you know, bodies react so differently because we've all had different exposures.

So, the same thing happens with poultry when they consume fluoride on their feet, it accumulates in their bones. So, if you're making bone broth with chickens that are not organic, that bone broth will be incredibly high in fluoride. And this was the source of some of my biggest breakouts. And I had no idea. I thought I was being healthy, I was making bone broth, I was buying, you know, the hormone-free antibiotic free poultry from Whole Foods, and I didn't realize that it would be so high in fluoride. Now I can still have chicken broth. I just know to use like really strictly raised organic chickens, and I don't have any reaction to it. But even things like chicken nuggets, and they did a study and found that a single serving of chicken nuggets can have half a child's upper safe limit of fluoride.

And there are a lot of variables like how long it was steep for, the age of the leaves, but since I'm sensitive, I just avoid black tea altogether. And that includes things like Kombucha. I heard from another woman on Instagram who was making her Kombucha and, you know, drinking, you know, three glasses a day, and was trying to eat really healthy and just her skin was horrible, and she realized that she was sensitive to fluoride. She cut out the Kombucha, and it completely cleared up. So, unfortunately, a lot of the things that we really like in the natural health world, you know, Kombucha and bone broth, you just have to be careful with those things if you are sensitive to fluoride.

Katie: I know I've got that question about tea quite a bit. So, I wanna make sure I clarify. So this is black tea being the highest, green tea to a lesser degree, but herbal teas and I know I get that question a lot, you probably do too, are herbal teas safe?

Melissa: Yes. It's really just Camillia sinensis plant. So, like your traditional black tea or green tea. White tea is very young. The tea leaves, so they don't have a lot of fluoride, but they will have more than just, you know, if you get peppermint tea or yerba mate, or I like raspberry leaf, because I feel like it tastes, you know, a lot like black tea, but without any risk of fluoride.

Katie: Got it. Okay. So, now let's talk about the water supply, because I know that I get questions from readers about the best way to get fluoride out of their water. And personally it really irritates me that those of us who are sensitive have to go to such extreme lengths and have, like we have this really big whole house water filter that filters out a lot of stuff in our water. For years we had an under the sink filter as well to specifically filter the drinking water even more. But explain how do we end up with fluoride in our water supply in general? And what can we do about it? Because like I said, it makes me angry that we basically unilateral decision was made to fluoride, so then now we essentially can't easily opt out, because it's in our water supply. So, how does this happen?
Melissa: Yeah. It's really frustrating. Like I said, the first trial was in 1945. And by 1950, the U.S. government went ahead and recommended it for everyone. It was supposed to be a 10 or 15-year study with a control city, so they could measure, you know the rate of cavities in the control city which is not Fluoridated, and in the Fluoridated town five years in, they just decided, "Oh, this is so great. Let's Fluoridate the control city too, and let's just recommend it for everyone. So the decision was very premature, and the head of the public house service at that time happened to be a lawyer for the number one polluter. So, I'll just throw that out there that there were a lot of special interests involved in this decision. And at the time, they weren't thinking about the toxicity of fluoride. They weren't thinking about how it could affect areas other than the teeth. So, they found fluoride accumulations in the brain, and in the pineal gland had the heaviest concentration of fluoride of any organ that's been measured that I've been able to find. So, they definitely weren't thinking about things like that back in the 50s when they decided to put it in the water supply.

And then, I think once that decision is made, it's really hard to say that you made a mistake, you know, so I think the dental establishment in the U.S. in the government will be the last ones to admit that that was a problem. It's just I think really hard to see past like the possibility that we could have been wrong for so long. But towns have had success on an individual level. So, the government just recommends it. They're not forcing anybody to add fluoride to their water supply. So there are a lot of towns where people have, just they vote on it and they say, "No. We don't want it." And that's kind of end of the story. So, there has been a lot of success. I don't wanna discourage people from contacting their politicians definitely and telling them you don't want fluoride in your water supply. A lot of towns have been able to prevent it from being added, or it's already being added and they've had it removed.

So, that's one thing at the local level. And you can also filtrate out, you know, with reverse osmosis filtration is usually the one I recommend. Big Berkey has a specific water filter. I've seen some reviews where people tested it, and they don't think it removed as much fluoride as they wanted. But I've also seen where you just need to really stay on top of replacing your cartridge, so I'm not sure. I don't have any experience with that. I actually moved to a non-fluoridated town. So, I don't have to worry about it. But that those are the ones, and distillation is the other filter that's very effective at removing fluoride. It just removes all the other minerals as well. So, you wanna make sure that you're getting a lot of minerals in your diet and some people will even add them back in.

Katie: Yeah. That's a good point. I've written about that as well. You definitely don't wanna take everything out and not put it back in, because then the water will pull that from your body to neutralize itself. But it just still, it boggles my mind with the burden of proof that they placed on testing anything these days that they actually did a test on people in the town for this and then decided before it was even done to just add it across the country as a general recommendation. It just completely boggles my mind. But that's really encouraging that places are successful sometimes in getting it out of the water, because I know it can be hard to go backwards. And so that's really encouraging to hear. I'd love if you could expound on the pineal gland a little bit more, because I've seen some research as far as Fluoride actually kind of calcifying that, and what the kind of problems it can cause later on. And I'm curious if you have seen that research, and if you could speak to it.

Melissa: So, there was a grad student in the UK, and I think it was in the 1997 and the late 90's, her name is Jennifer Luke. And she dissected 11 human pineal glands and found highest concentrations of any organ in the human body. And I think that's crazy that that research was done by a grad student in the UK, and we had been Fluoridating for decades at that time, and no one was looking at that. You know, we know that the pineal
gland is responsible for, you know, sleep, you know, and controlling different hormonal rhythms of the body. So, we know it's a very important brain organ, and it's really amazing to me that that hasn't been more of a focus of research. I think when people hear of pineal gland they think, "Oh, third eye." Like, "Whoa, you're really out there." But it is an actual brain organ in our brain. So, I think to discount that, it can calcify with fluoride is really, really pretty unscientific way to approach it.

And then, there's a toxicologist Alyson Lenox who also studied how fluoride affects the brain. And she was the first toxicologist to run a dental toxicology program. She was at Harvard, they brought her over to a dental center in Boston to start this dental toxicology program and her supervisor asked her to look into fluoride. And she didn't think anything of it. She just thought, "Okay. This will be like an interesting starting point." You know, she didn't really think there would be any toxicity. But when they started their research on rats, and they realized that fluoride was accumulating in the brain, and it is crossing the blood brain barrier, she was just shocked. And so, she published her research in a respectable journal, and she thought all of the officials would be really impressed and like, "Wow. We need to take action on this. We need to look into this further." But instead, all her funding was pulled, and she lost her job because she couldn't do any more research.

So, you can see interviews with her online. It's really crazy. They just didn't want to see this research. And now almost, you know, 20 years later, there's a lot more research about the neuro-toxic effects of fluoride. And in 2012, Harvard researchers did meta-analysis of all the scientific literature. And they found strong indication that fluoride adversely alters cognitive development in children. And they said this should be a high research priority. So, the National Toxicology Program in 2015 wrote up a proposal and they admitted that the existing research is limited, and its ability to evaluate how fluoride is affecting the cognitive development of children. So, I think that is just terrifying, and in light of that, we need to stop fluoridation immediately until we can fully study that.

So, you're already seeing like press-release of this I see from the American Dental Association saying, "Oh, here's a study, and it's just reaffirming that fluoride is completely safe." But that was just 2015 when they admitted that science is limited. So, there's no way that we've, you know, proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that fluoride is safe for children. There was another study that a 12-year study, U.S.-funded that they did in Mexico, and they found a significant drop in IQ for every half a milligram of fluoride that pregnant women were exposed to.

So, I feel like there's just so many red flags that we really need to end fluoridation right now, and in the meantime we need to be filtering fluoride out of our water especially if you're pregnant and you have young children.

Katie: I absolutely agree. And I've felt that way for years, and I've been saying that to close friends, something I do need to write about, and I'll make sure to link to your book when I do. But, like, based on everything you just said, I'm thinking as a mom, even if we thought that it might have some dental benefits, when you're saying things like it affects the IQ, and it affects the pineal gland, which, by the way, secretes melatonin which you need for sleep, which we all love when our children do, not to mention that melatonin is involved in like things like, you know, correct development of reproductive organs and the circadian rhythm that you're set with for life. Like, these are all very important things. So, even if it was just one of those, as moms, I've always felt like, "Shouldn't we take a step back and go maybe until we know for sure that it's not doing this, we should avoid it in our children."
And that can mean even especially at the dental office because that is a place where kids get a lot of exposure. I know that I've seen nursery water in bottles which are plastic, which is a whole another problem, but specifically marketed to babies that they need more fluoride which boggles my mind. But I can only speak from my personal experience, I have never let my kids have Fluoride in their teeth in their toothpaste or at the dental office and we filter our water. And anecdotally, I only sample size of six kids, but none of them have ever, ever had a cavity for what it's worth. But I'm curious, your take on this specific marketing of fluoride to children and how we as moms can kind of opt out of that.

Melissa: American Dental Association has gone back and forth on saying you should not, you know, "Infant Formula, don't make it with Fluoridated water." And then they said, "Oh, it's okay." You can make it with Fluoridated water." So, I don't think they really know, but they want it to be safe, you know, just like they've always wanted it fluoride to be safe. But I think the science just isn't there. Like, it's just too much of a risk, and like you said, you can prevent cavities just by having really solid nutrition and restricting sugar and carbohydrates from your children's diet. So, it's really not worth it. And I think the nursery water with fluoride is just really, really a bad idea.

Katie: Agreed. And that would be my challenge to any moms listening who have been on the fluoride been wagon before, especially with ingesting Fluoride. If you can acknowledge that, you think that ingesting fluoride could help the teeth by being consumed internally. Then, it's logical that you would also have to consider that what we ingest in our food, in our supplement also affects the teeth when we can take it internally. And I've written about that there's a lot of research about fat soluble vitamins and minerals and how they interact with our saliva, and inside the teeth to create stronger teeth and to avoid cavities. So, I would say like research that if you've been just relying on fluoride as a dental aid to help avoid cavities. There are other ways that I would argue based on the research are more effective to begin with.

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Keto really just helps make ketosis available to everyone, everywhere, all the time without the need to do extended fasting, like I said. You can check out these and all of their other products at perfectketo.com/healthymoms. And if you use the code HEALTHYMOMS, all uppercase, you can save 20% on any order.

Katie: Okay. So, we talked about the common sources of Fluoride exposure, and how we can filter our own water and what we can do at home. Is there anything else we can do? I know that you're working on a petition, but is it possible that we can never reverse this trend completely and get rid of Fluoride in our drinking water across the country?

Melissa: I do think so. I think it starts at the local level. Like I mentioned, they're already having success with that you know, in cities around the country. And moms really have an advantage there, because I think when a mom talks to a political representative, they know how serious you are about health issues. So, I think that's a great place to start it's just by calling local politicians. I talked to one woman recently and she said when I talked to my local representative and I told them about fluoride and how dangerous it is, and I didn't want it in the water, and they really thanked me because they didn't know this information. So, I think just sharing this other side of the story with your local representatives can go a long way. And there are a lot of towns who are changing their mind about fluoride.

And then on the national level, I started a petition at change.org, just because I didn't want people to get all riled up about fluoride and not have anything they could do about it. So, if you go to a petition.projectfree.me, it will route to the petition@change.org and you'll have a chance to sign that. And I just think as soon as the federal government stops recommending it, you know, they can just say, "We're gonna leave it up to the states, or we'll leave it up to the individual water, you know, sapolities." I think it's going to just end, but it costs a lot of money to add fluoride to the water. These chemicals are really dangerous. There's been a lot of incidents where, you know, it's dangerous for the workers there who are adding the fluoride to the water. And if sometimes they're accidental like over-fluoridation situations where people have died, or, you know, people with kidney disease will have a really hard time processing that extra fluoride in the water. So I don't think towns necessarily want to be doing it, but they're just doing it because it's recommended, and, you know, they're trying to help the community prevent cavities.

So, I think once we get over that like tipping point where enough people know the full story of fluoridation, we will be able to end it on the national level. And so...oh, and the other thing, I think it's just having conversations, you know, like you and I are having right now, sharing our experience, because when people, you know, realize that you've done your research and that you've seen how this affects your body or you know people that are sensitive to it, we're starting to be more familiar with all of these crazy allergies. So, I think the idea that people are sensitive to fluoride isn't that foreign to most people anymore.

Katie: Yeah, exactly. Like my reason comes from the thyroid background, again, and that's part of my medical record that I'm actually supposed to avoid fluoride and even too much iodine for reasons that have to do with uptake and thyroid tissue. But the point being that there are people like you and I who are affected by this in a negative way. And for people who still think it's a good idea, they can buy fluorinated water, or they can use fluoride at the dentist's office, or use toothpaste with fluoride, whereas we can't easily opt out of it right now. And I think that's the important thing to consider even if you're listening and you are pro-fluoride that's fine. And obviously your decision and I respect that, but that's still a decision that's being made for a lot of people that we cannot easily opt out of. A lot of people can't afford huge water filters that cost thousands of dollars.
to avoid fluoride and their health is suffering at the meantime.

So, I love that you are bringing awareness to this, and I'm hopeful that through things like your petition, and like you said, all of us working on a grassroots level that maybe we can see some big changes on this in the future, and also I think that's a great point when it comes to any aspect of health or life. Like, rather than waiting for the federal government to step in and do something, we can all start making changes certainly in our own homes and then beyond that in our own communities and states because you can just work a lot more easily and more quickly when you start with the grassroots level and build from there.

So, I love that you are bringing awareness about this. I'm curious. Another thing I like to ask toward the end of interviews is are there other things about your areas of expertise, so fluoride in this case, that you feel that people don't really know or understand?

Melissa: There's so much about fluoride that I don't think people understand just because we've been so focused on Fluoride as the dental treatment, but I think the biggest things is they don't understand the pollution angle. So that really changes things when you learn that it was the USDA said that, you know, surely fluoride has caused more damage to domestic crops than any other air pollutants. So, it wasn't just one air pollutant. It was a major pollutant. And I think people don't know that it's a pesticide. That really seems to shock people because then you think, "Wow. It's kills pests, you know, what is it doing in my body?" That's another big red flag. And you can actually see the chronic fluoride intoxication on your teeth, on your children's teeth.

So dental fluorosis is a very common sign that you've been exposed to too much Fluoride during those years where your teeth were forming. And I actually have dental fluorosis. So that shows when I was little I was I was consuming too much fluoride. And in the 80s, it used to be about a quarter of adolescence, you know, had this dental fluorosis, that's sometimes it can be like a dark stain on the tooth, or it can be like an opaque pattern where the tooth kind of looks clear in certain parts or like bright white splotches. So it manifests in different ways. And it used to be about a quarter of children had dental fluorosis, and they did another study in the early 2000s, and it had risen to over 40%. So it's rising. The more fluoride infiltrates our food supply through pesticides and through the water supply. So those are just a few of the things that I think people should definitely know about fluoride.

Katie: Yeah. No kidding. And I'm so glad. Like I said, you're raising awareness about this. And I have a few friends, I mentioned one who's a really good friend who's a dentist who they have opted out of offering Fluoride a requirement in their office, and I have so much respect for that, because I think just like every other area of research with fluoride, we'd actually do need to reevaluate fluoride in toothpaste and dental treatments and see if there's a more-effective and less-harmful option now that we've got so much more research to look at. So, I love that you are bringing light to all of this.

Slightly unrelated, but I'm also curious if there is a book other than your own, which will obviously be linked in the show notes, but that has had a really big impact on you that you would recommend.

Melissa: There's an herbalist called of Stephen Harrod Buhner. He's written a ton of books mostly about plants, you know, one of my favorites is “Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm”. He's just really, everything he writes is so fascinating. He wrote I really popular book on lyme disease, but he wrote a book called “Ensoiling Language,” which is about how to write nonfiction. And before I wrote my book, you know, I
didn't consider myself a writer, I considered myself an analyst, and I didn't even know if I could write a book. So I read a lot about how to write non-fiction in particular. And his book really made a big impression on me, just about how to, not just present information, but try to like enthrall your reader, you know, and try to really pull them into a story. So I love that book. It's called “Ensouling Language”.

And actually, when I finished my book, I sent it to him and I said, "I'm sure you have like a big shelf of books that were inspired by your book solen language. Just put this on the shelf next them. You know, thank you so much for writing your book." And to my surprise, he read it, and he ended up writing the forward for when it was officially published in May. So I love that book and I definitely recommend it for anyone who's thinking about writing or it's really great for just any kind of creative work. It helps you tap into like what is really fascinating about your particular subject matter and how to present that to other people.

Katie: Nice. I love that I have not read that, and it sounds fascinating, so I'm gonna add it to my list. And lastly, if there was a piece of advice that you could spread far and wide, what would it be and why? And a couple hundred thousand people will hear this podcast so I can at least help you get it to them. But what would that advice be and why.

Melissa: My advice is we need to end public water fluoridation right now. It is affecting our children and our society in adverse ways that we don't even know. So, that's why I'm doing this, this is why I wrote the book, and that's why, you know, I'm doing these podcasts, it's really not in my wheel house, but I just really believe that we need to end fluoridation, and that it's going to have long-standing implications that we have no idea.

Katie: I agree with you. And I know all the things that we've talked about especially your book, and, well, both of your books and your petition. I'll make sure those are linked in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. So, if you're listening and don't have the ability to write it down, just find the links there. And where can people find you, Melissa, if they wanna learn more?

Melissa: Well, the website is hiddencauseofacne.com, and that has links to the Hidden Cause of Acne on Amazon. I'm just about to, by the time this airs I will have released a second book called "F is for Fluoride." And this just like a little children's book style book, because readers of my first book who all of a sudden want to avoid fluoride. You know, it's really hard to explain that your friends and family who think you're crazy, that your acne is caused by fluoride. So, this is just a little book that you can share with people that tells the story, the pollution story behind fluoridation that explains how it's a pesticide, it explains all of these adverse research.

And it kind of answers the question of, you know, how could we have been wrong for so long? It's just amazing. Like that doesn't seem possible. But this little book is designed to like get those main points across. So I don't have a website for that one, but I'm sure you'll have the link somewhere, or you could just find it on Amazon or wherever you buy books.

Katie: Absolutely. We'll make sure that one is linked as well. Melissa, thank you so much for your work and for spreading the word about this. I know it can be, like I said, a controversial topic at times. And I think you are bringing such a valid and research backed and calm perspective that's so needed in this topic, and that hopefully we'll continue to affect change hopefully eventually at the national level. So I really appreciate your work in what you do.
Melissa: Well, thank you. Thank you for having me on your show, Kate. I really appreciate it.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening and I hope to see you again next time on "The Wellness Mama Podcast."

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