Millions of children are exposed to excessive amounts of fluoride through drinking water contaminated from natural geological sources. In China, the burning of fluoride-rich coal adds to the problem. Small amounts of fluoride are good for teeth; it is added to toothpaste and, in some countries, to drinking water. At higher doses, it destroys teeth and accumulates in bones, leading to crippling skeletal damage. With their bodies still growing, children are most at risk.

Like fluoride, arsenic is widely distributed throughout the earth’s crust, and is present in almost all waters in very small amounts. In certain areas, however, there are dangerous levels of this toxin in children’s drinking water. The most tragic example is Bangladesh, where thousands of wells are causing a mass poisoning of the population. Unsafe wells are marked with red paint, warning people that this water is not for drinking.

Fluorosis
- Tooth discoloration and decay
- Crippling skeletal damage

Arsenosis
- Skin pigmentation changes and skin thickening (hyperkeratosis)
- Cancer of the skin, lungs, bladder and kidney

There are 2 million cases of skeletal fluorosis in China.

Some estimates suggest arsenic in drinking water will cause 200,000 to 270,000 deaths from cancer in Bangladesh alone.