



Sensible Action For Ending Mercury-Induced  
Neurological Disorders

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## **SafeMinds Applauds Proposed Global Treaty Ban on Mercury in Vaccines**

*No amount of mercury is insignificant when directly injected into the body of an infant, young child or pregnant woman*

(Atlanta, GA ) SafeMinds applauds UNEP's draft treaty language which does not exempt the use of mercury in pharmaceutical products, including vaccines, from the global ban. Governmental regulators, public health officials and pharmaceutical companies have recognized that the toxicity of mercury in pharmaceutical and personal care products, to which people are directly exposed, justifies a preventive approach to minimize all exposures.

"We need the vaccine industry to move into the 21st century," said Eric Uram, Executive Director of the Coalition for SafeMinds, an observer to the negotiations. "The treaty looks to phase-out unnecessary mercury use in products by requiring alternatives. We need to make sure all products used are the safest and least toxic possible. The treaty does this by signaling the end of using thimerosal in vaccines."

In most industrialized countries it has been relatively easy to replace, reduce, or eliminate thimerosal as a preservative in single and multi-dose vaccines. Alternatives are available to address issues related to vaccine shelf-life and sterility in developing countries that can even eliminate the use of preservatives, but pressure to change has never really been applied.

"The evidence continues to mount that mercury in vaccines is not safe, that negative effects happen even with vaccine levels of exposure," said Dr. Jose Dorea, Professor of Nutritional Sciences, Universidad de Brasilia. "We must end the use of thimerosal as soon as possible. No pregnant mother or child should have to trade getting mercury injected into them for the prevention of an infectious disease."

None of the "live" vaccines including oral polio, measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), yellow fever or tuberculosis (BCG) have ever contained thimerosal and current immunization programs for those vaccines will not be impacted. However, thimerosal is still used in many diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT), tetanus toxoid (TT), hepatitis B, and influenza vaccines, especially in developing countries.

The World Health Organization maintains that thimerosal is necessary as a preservative in multi-dose vaccine preparations, especially in developing countries. Fortunately, other readily available products approved for use as vaccine preservatives do not contain mercury, are much less toxic, and are cost-comparable to thimerosal including 2-phenoxyethanol, benzethonium chloride and phenol. Several vaccines with one of these non-mercury preservatives have been approved by the U.S.FDA and administered to children in the United States.

"A blanket exemption for use of thimerosal is unjustified and urgent efforts are needed to phase out its use in all products globally. It is unethical and unjust to continue the exportation of thimerosal-containing products from countries where they are no longer accepted into other less developed countries. SafeMinds contends that immediate substitution should be a global priority," said Lyn Redwood, RN MSN, Vice-President, Coalition for SafeMinds.

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**(SafeMinds Applauds Proposed Global Treaty Ban on Mercury in Vaccines -- cont.)**

Thimerosal Facts:

- The typical concentration of mercury in products preserved with thimerosal is 50,000 ppb. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires liquid waste which exceeds 200 ppb of mercury to be disposed of as hazardous waste. Mercury becomes airborne when unused thimerosal-containing products are incinerated as was the case with millions of unused flu vaccines in 2010.
- Wastewater that results from vaccine production processes are polluted with thimerosal concentrations ranging from 25 to 50 mg/L. The manufacturing and disposal process for these products results in human exposure as does the elimination of these products into our municipal waterways from both humans and animals. There is limited, if any, remediation technology available to remove mercury from vaccine production wastewater.
- The state of California recognizes thimerosal as a reproductive toxicant and exposure during pregnancy can disrupt the development of the fetus or cause fetal death. Prenatal exposure may also result in birth defects, low birth weight, and psychological or behavioral deficits that manifest later in life.
- Levels of mercury documented in infants after exposure to thimerosal-containing vaccines have reached levels classified by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as mercury chemical poisoning. These same exposure levels in infant primates resulted in significant deposition of inorganic mercury in their brains.
- Hundreds of scientific studies published over the past five decades have demonstrated significant toxicity of thimerosal, calling for the removal or restriction of its use as a preservative in all products. For a summary of publications supporting removal of thimerosal from vaccines, please visit:  
<http://www.safeminds.org/research/docs/SM%20Science%20Summary%202010-11.pdf>
- Studies have shown increased incidence of speech delays and tics in children exposed to thimerosal (Verstraaten, 2003; Thompson, 2007).
- In a recent study of pneumococcal vaccine (Khandke et al. 2011) 2-PE provided a “superior antimicrobial effectiveness over Thimerosal”.

The third negotiating session of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) to develop a legally binding instrument to reduce mercury exposure will take place in early November in Nairobi. This historic decision to address mercury, one of the most toxic substances on earth, was agreed to unanimously by over 140 countries.

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The purpose of the Coalition for SafeMinds is to restore health and protect future generations by eradicating the devastation of autism and associated health disorders induced by mercury and other man made toxicants.