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# Autism Spectrum Disorder has Risen to New Heights

Posted By [Dr. Mercola](#) | September 10 2009 | 35,885 views

A pair of studies on autism rates show that somewhere around one percent of all U.S. children currently have an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The rate is even higher among 6 to 11 year olds and among boys.

Among all children aged two to 17, one in 100 currently have an ASD, which is considerably higher than the previously estimated rate of one in 150. There was a 100 percent increase in parent-reported ASD rates compared to 2003.

One possible explanation for some of the increase is the expansion of the ASD classification within the public schools to include not only full-blown autism, but also milder forms of ASD such as Pervasive Developmental Disorder and Asperger's Syndrome. But it is difficult to believe that this accounts for the entire increase.

One possible answer is the Hepatitis B vaccine, which also contained 25 micrograms of mercury containing thimerosal. Only 8 percent of infant children received the Hep B vaccine in 1992, when that birth cohort showed an ASD rate of 60 per 10,000.

By 1994, the number of children receiving Hep B vaccine had reached just 27 percent -- and the cohort showed an ASD rate of 66 per 10,000. The Hep B coverage rate rose to 82 percent by 1996, when that cohort's ASD rate exploded to around 100 per 10,000, or one in 100.

## Dr. Mercola's Comments:

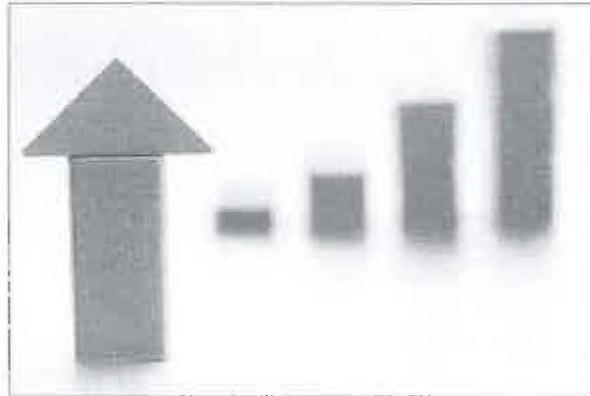
If you've been following this issue you will be very aware that autism is on the rise.

For a number of years the accepted rate of autism was about one in 150, but for awhile now I have been stating that the incidence is far higher than that, and now we finally have statistics to support that.

Overall, the 2007 survey results from the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) reveals a 100 percent increase in parent-reported cases of autism spectrum disorders (ASD), compared to their 2003 survey.

According to this latest data, the odds that your infant will develop some form of ASD are now one in 63. And if you have a boy, the chances are a staggering one in 38.

That's 2.6 percent of all male children in the U.S.!



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# The Blaylock Wellness Report

Living a Long, Healthy Life

Edited by Russell E. Blaylock, MD

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## Key Points

- Is there a link between aluminum exposure and dementia?
- Probe the dangers of vaccines and aluminum
- How widespread is aluminum exposure? Are you at risk?
- Fight aluminum's toxicity through nutrients

### PLUS

- Combat HPV through nutrition
- Army suicide rates on the rise — but why?
- Atherosclerosis — why traditional medicines fail

### ASK DR. BLAYLOCK

- Exercising after breast cancer treatments; vegetarians — get the right kind of protein; the dangers of sucralose

## Aluminum: Poison Hiding In Plain Sight

When most people think about environmental hazards — if they think about them at all — they generally consider them other peoples' problem. After all, if you don't live near a smokestack or a chemical plant, your environment is safe, right?

In years past, I too considered all the excitement about environmental hazards caused by modern industrialization nothing but a lot of political posturing. All that changed 15 years ago when I saw a new patient whose central nervous system had been severely damaged.

My patient was a farmer, a man of strong principles, with a deep sense of morality and a rock-solid commitment to his Christian beliefs. He had been splashed with a pesticide while preparing to dust his crops. After the incident he took a thorough shower to remove the pesticide from his skin. Despite his efforts, a short time later he became ill and was taken to a doctor.

He was treated with a drug that reverses the chemical process of the pesticide, and he should have had a full recovery — but he didn't. His condition continued to deteriorate:

- Over time, the nerves in his arms and legs deteriorated
- His speech was affected
- He lost much of his coordination
- He had difficulty putting thoughts together

At first I was skeptical. I explained to him how the pesticide worked in bugs, and that there was no logical reason why he should still have all these symptoms. He asked if I would be willing to read some scientific studies he had collected concerning neurological damage in humans caused by that particular pesticide. I agreed and he handed me a tall stack of papers.

It had been a long day, and by the time I got home, I wanted to put my feet up and relax. But, my curiosity piqued, I picked up the stack of papers and began to read through them. Soon I was busy highlighting sections and scribbling copious notes on my legal pad. I couldn't believe how little I knew about the neurotoxicology of pesticides.

After that experience, I came down off my high horse and started my quest to understand the subject of neurotoxicology. In the ensuing 15 years, I have come to appreciate that we are living in a sea of toxins.



Since that incident, other cases of aluminum toxicity have appeared, with causes such as a long-term ingestion of aluminum-containing antacids in patients with poor kidney function and use of an aluminum composite plate in a brain operation. In each case, patients developed seizures, confusion, and dementia.

Examination of the brains of these aluminum-related casualties did not show the typical pathological findings of Alzheimer's disease, only widespread degeneration of selected areas of the brain. However, we must keep in mind that these were acute exposures — that is, they were exposed to high levels of aluminum over a short period of time.

Subsequent studies using prolonged exposure to lower doses of aluminum (mimicking what people are normally exposed to in society) did show changes similar to Alzheimer's disease, and some resembled another neurodegenerative condition: Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS).

Likewise, researchers have shown that even trace amounts of aluminum, equal to that found in a single glass of water, readily entered the brain of animals.

### Aluminum and the Nervous System

My review of aluminum toxicity toward the nervous system indicates that one of the main toxic effects is immunoexcitotoxicity.

This involves triggering brain inflammation in combination with excitotoxicity. It has been shown that aluminum specifically targets the brain and causes it to become inflamed.<sup>7</sup> And, as I have shown in previous newsletters, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and ALS are considered to be inflammatory diseases and excitotoxic diseases.

One of the commonly found reactions to aluminum in the brain is the activation of the brain's immune cell — the microglia.

This has been found in all cases of dialysis dementia and other reported cases of aluminum toxicity.

Using mice, researchers at the University of Georgia found that animals given aluminum-containing drinking water secreted higher levels of the inflammatory cytokine TNF-alpha than did those drinking aluminum-free water.<sup>8</sup> TNF-alpha is primarily secreted by the microglia. What this means is that when you drink your aluminum-

containing tap water, your brain secretes higher levels of inflammatory chemicals and this puts you at a greater risk of Alzheimer's disease. It also puts your children at risk of abnormal brain development, learning and behavioral problems.

Aluminum also interferes with mitochondrial energy production and brain cells are extremely dependent on a constant supply of energy. Anything that reduces the brain's supply of energy greatly magnifies its sensitivity to excitotoxicity.

Another way aluminum enhances excitotoxicity is by combining with glutamate, the excitotoxic amino acid.

Glutamate is found in a great many foods, either

### About Dr. Blaylock



Dr. Russell Blaylock edits Newsmax.com's **Blaylock Wellness Report**. He is a nationally recognized board-certified neurosurgeon, health practitioner, author, and lecturer.

He attended the Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans and completed his internship and neurosurgical residency at the Medical University

of South Carolina in Charleston, S.C.

For the past 26 years, he has practiced neurosurgery in addition to having a nutritional practice.

He recently retired from his neurosurgical duties to devote his full attention to nutritional studies and research. Dr. Blaylock has authored three books on nutrition and wellness, including "Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills," "Health and Nutrition Secrets That Can Save Your Life," and his most recent work, "Natural Strategies for The Cancer Patient." An in-demand guest for radio and television programs, he lectures extensively to both lay and professional medical audiences on a variety of nutrition-related subjects.

Also, Dr. Blaylock has been appointed to serve on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Life Extension Foundation. He is the 2004 recipient of the Integrity in Science Award granted by the Weston A. Price Foundation.

Dr. Blaylock serves on the editorial staff of the Journal of the American Nutraceutical Association and on the editorial staff of the Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, official publication of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons.

He previously served as clinical assistant professor of neurosurgery at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., and is currently a visiting professor of biology at the Belhaven College, also in Jackson.

as an additive or naturally occurring.

The aluminum binds with the glutamate, forming an aluminum-L-glutamate complex that is highly absorbed by both the GI tract and the brain. Interestingly, a new study found that magnesium aspartate decreased the aluminum concentration in the brain cortex of rats.<sup>9</sup>

In another study, researchers fed rats either aluminum glutamate complex, aluminum chloride, or glutamate alone and found that the aluminum-glutamate complex significantly increased brain aluminum levels over just feeding aluminum chloride alone and that it reached high levels in important areas of the brain:

- The hippocampus
- Occipito-parietal cortex
- Cerebellum<sup>10</sup>

The aluminum-glutamate complex appeared to make the blood-brain barrier more permeable to aluminum.

From these studies it appears that aluminum, either as a salt or combined with glutamate or citrate, triggers brain inflammation and excitotoxicity (immunoexcitotoxicity) and this leads to a slow degeneration of specific areas of the brain and spinal cord that may take decades to fully manifest.

## Vaccines and Aluminum

During the debates over the cause of autism, much of the early attention focused on the mercury additive thimerosal. Mercury is a powerful neurotoxin, as has been well demonstrated in scientific literature.

Yet somehow the medical establishment ignored 100 years of studies clearly demonstrating the toxicity of mercury. Then sympathetic scientists flooded the medical literature with "studies" that found no harm at all from mercury/thimerosal. Then — amazingly — these same "scientists" actually wrote articles that implied mercury improved IQ.

Of course, everyone who knew better preferred to hide in the shadows rather than point out the glaring flaws in these studies. Vaccination had joined the ranks of political correctness.

What remained in the shadows during all this fuss over vaccination was the obvious toxicity of aluminum.

Compelling research had previously demonstrated that aluminum was an accumulative neurotoxin, even in small concentrations. It had also been demonstrated that aluminum had a tendency to concentrate in the hippocampus, an area of the brain vital to critical functions including:

- Learning
- Memory
- Emotions

There were two other areas of the nervous system that were known to be very sensitive to aluminum toxicity and to concentrate aluminum — the midbrain and the motor neurons of the motor cortex and spinal cord.

## Brain Development Implications

It was, of course, no coincidence that aluminum was concentrating in areas of the brain associated with early childhood neurodevelopment, as well as in areas associated with three major neurodegenerative diseases — Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and ALS. As we shall see, it also concentrates in the myelin covering of neural pathways, linking it to another degenerative disease — multiple sclerosis.

Aluminum has been added to vaccines for almost 90 years; its purpose is to stimulate the immune system to react against the organism in the vaccine. When injected into the muscles, the aluminum forms a complex with invading organisms (such as the influenza virus).

This complex then attracts the body's immune cells, which react to the aluminum-influenza complex by generating antibodies. At the same time, the body makes a genetic record of the invading organism for future reference.

Or at least that is how it is supposed to work.

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## Vaccinations Weaken the Immune System

In fact, the operation of the immune system is still largely a mystery. Yet, there is growing evidence that our current vaccination policy is, ironically, weakening our immune systems. In fact, recurring natural exposure to childhood viruses not only keeps our immune systems resistant to infections, it also provides resistance to cancer.

Two friends of mine have written a paper on the neurotoxic effects of aluminum adjuvants in vaccines. In this eye-opening study, they analyze data on the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders recorded from 1991 to 2008, and correlate it with the total aluminum dose from all vaccines mandated by the CDC for children up to age 6. They did the same for the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland.

It is known that injected aluminum adjuvants remain at the site of the injection for years, and that aluminum is slowly released into the bloodstream and enters other organs, including the brain. Hundreds of cases of a new disorder called macrophagic myofasciitis, which affects specialized immune cells (macrophages), have been linked to the aluminum in the muscle tissue. It has also been associated with progressive brain degeneration in children vaccinated with the tetanus and hepatitis B vaccines.

The FDA has set the safe dosage limit for aluminum at 5 mcg/kg body weight per day. Below are the aluminum contents of commonly administered vaccines:

- DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis) — 625 mcg
- Hepatitis B — 375 mcg
- Hepatitis A — 250 mcg
- Hib (haemophilus influenza type B) — 225 mcg
- PVC (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine) — 125 mcg

The paper's authors found that the highest aluminum burden was given to two-month-old babies: 270 mcg/kg per day. That's almost 50 times higher than the official FDA safety limit.

If we gave adults an equal dose of aluminum, based on body weight, they would have to get 15 to 38 vaccines in one day.

Children from the United States, the U.K., and Canada received significantly higher aluminum

## How Widespread Is Aluminum Exposure?

Thousands of products are made from aluminum, from the engine in your car to packaging for foods. If you check the ingredients on medications, you will see that most contain an aluminum additive.

Until recently, the main food source containing aluminum was baking powder. Biscuits, pancakes, and most baked goods have added aluminum. You can buy aluminum-free baking powder, but that version is rarely used by food processors. Salt used to contain added aluminum to prevent caking, but it has been removed from most brands. Sea salt, however, still contains aluminum.

Some natural products, such as black tea, also have very high aluminum levels. The tea plant selectively extracts the aluminum from the soil and concentrates it in the leaves. (Green tea has far less aluminum, and white tea has very little.)

The No. 1 food source for aluminum is soy products. Soybeans naturally have very high aluminum levels along with high glutamate levels. Americans have been convinced by a clever marketing campaign to consume massive amounts of soy, including the most commonly used formula for babies.

If this is not bad enough, soy also has very high manganese levels and fluoride levels, both known neurotoxins. So soy foods and drinks have quite a neurotoxic mixture: aluminum, glutamate, fluoride and manganese.

Even the American Academy of Pediatrics expressed concern about the neurotoxic level of some of the metals in soy baby formulae. Studies that looked at aluminum absorption in babies exposed to aluminum found that infants absorb a considerable amount of aluminum from ingested products.

A great number of processed foods, medications, and drinks are loaded with aluminum. And because aluminum is added to drinking water, our plant foods are accumulating (bio-accumulating) the aluminum, so that over time the levels will continue to rise, just as we have seen with fluoride.

It is important to check all labels on foods and medications. If you see aluminum, don't buy it.

## Combat Aluminum's Toxicity

Now that you know about the dangers of aluminum, how can you fight its toxic effects? With these natural substances that can reduce inflammation and remove harmful metals from the body.

**Bee Propolis.** Several studies have shown that bee propolis (a flavonoid rich, resinous substance that bees collect from tree buds) can counteract the damaging effects of aluminum. Rats given aluminum plus propolis or propolis alone demonstrated an elevation in antioxidant enzymes and a return to normal blood lipid profiles.<sup>11</sup> Propolis has also been found to have powerful anti-inflammatory properties.<sup>14</sup>

**Ascorbic Acid.** In another study, male New Zealand rabbits were given aluminum chloride and varying doses of ascorbic acid (vitamin C). Researchers found that vitamin C significantly reduced the level of free radicals generated by the aluminum and returned total lipid and cholesterol levels to normal.<sup>15</sup>

**Chelators.** A chelator is a substance used to remove excess metal from the body. The traditional pharmaceutical treatment for aluminum overload is desferrioxamine, a chelator that is administered either intramuscularly or via IV. Unfortunately, this can cause painful swelling at the site of the injection and has a number of serious side effects. A newer agent, called Feralex-G, appears to be superior and can be taken orally. Recent studies have shown that, unlike most other aluminum chelators, Feralex-G can remove aluminum that has bound to the cell nucleus. (Aluminum tightly binds to the nucleic acid of DNA; this causes much of its toxicity.) Combining vitamin C with Feralex-G significantly improves removal of aluminum from the cell nucleus, a process called shuttle chelation.<sup>16</sup>

burdens from their vaccines than children from Scandinavian countries.

This study found a strong correlation between the highest aluminum body content and the risk of developing autism. The U.K. has the most aggressive vaccine program and the highest incidence of autism in the world at 1 in every 64 births. The rate in the U.S. is 1 in every 91 births. Unlike other countries that spread out the early vaccines, in the U.K. they are given at birth, and at 1, 2, 3, and 4 months of age — an incredibly obtuse policy.

## The Impact on Infants

Previous studies have shown that as little as 4-5 mcg/kg of aluminum given to preterm infants can cause neurodevelopmental problems.

A study by Carolyn Gallagher and Melody Goodman of the Stony Brook University Medical Center found that boys given the triple series of HepB vaccine from birth were significantly more likely to develop disabilities by age 9.

A follow-up study of boys age 3 to 17 who were vaccinated in their first month had a threefold higher risk of developing autism than did unvaccinated boys. This has been ignored by the vaccine proponents and the media.

When challenged by this data, Dr. Paul Offit, a vocal vaccine proponent, defended the policy by saying that infant formulas often contain similar amounts of aluminum. But studies show that only 0.25 percent of the aluminum from infant formula is absorbed in the blood, whereas 100 percent of the aluminum injected by vaccination enters the bloodstream.

More than 1 million children have been diagnosed with autism, with 24,000 new cases being diagnosed each year. The largest increase in autism diagnoses occurred in 1992: a 189 percent jump.

Why the dramatic increase in cases in 1992? It turns out that six new vaccine doses were added to the

**A note from Dr. Blaylock:** Advertisements for various supplements may appear in the newsletter or attached to the newsletter. I have nothing to do with these advertisements and do not endorse them. The only supplements I endorse are those that I list in the newsletter. This is not to say that I object to the supplements; it's just that I am not familiar with the supplements being advertised.

Please note that this advice is generic and not specific to any individual. You should consult with your doctor before undertaking any medical or nutritional course of action.

vaccine schedule from 1981 to 1992, all given during the first two years of life, a period when the brain is undergoing tremendous development.

The correlation between the aluminum burden from the vaccines and the incidence of autism is strong. What's more, researchers have found the same correlations in the other eight countries examined. Keep this in mind when it comes time for your children and grandchildren to be vaccinated.

### Current Trends Can't Be Sustained

For those of you who say, "Well that is upsetting, but it doesn't really affect me," here is some bad news: Adults are now being encouraged to submit to a number of aluminum-containing vaccines — every year. And the effect on the adult brain can be just as devastating for a number of reasons.

First, the aging process actually reduces your brain's defense mechanisms — it can't tolerate aluminum toxicity as well as a young brain. Recall that aluminum selectively induces brain inflammation. As we age, our brain becomes progressively more inflamed, and aluminum accelerates and magnifies that inflammation.

There is also powerful evidence that aluminum worsens the effects of other toxins, such as pesticides, herbicides, mercury, cadmium, fluoride, lead, and glutamate. In essence, accumulating aluminum is making your brain age much faster.

Because aluminum accumulates in the parts of the brain associated with Alzheimer's, risk of early development rises substantially with exposure to aluminum.

All neurodegenerative diseases are associated with microglial activation — that is, intense immune activation within the brain. Aluminum activates microglia, and because it accumulates within the microglia, it acts as a continuous source of activation lasting for decades.

Aluminum also accumulates in the motor neurons; this is strongly correlated with ALS.

When I was training as a neurosurgeon, ALS was a very rare disease. Since then, incidence has increased dramatically. ALS is also characterized by intense inflammation in the nervous system.

You may recall that servicemen getting the anthrax vaccine were found to have a twofold higher risk of developing ALS. The anthrax vaccine, a four-dose injection, contains a total dosage of 2.4 mg of

### Hungary's Toxic Spill Highlights Chemical Impact on Health

It's the stuff of headlines and horror — in October a massive reservoir, maintained by the Hungarian Aluminum Production and Trade Company, unleashed a torrent of toxic sludge that flooded unsuspecting Hungarian towns and threatened the Danube River.

Several people have already been killed, and the 35.3 million cubic feet of red sludge has caused billions of dollars in damage. A six-foot high wall of the slurry was seen flowing through streets in nearby Kolontar. Company spokesmen have stated that the spill contains a mixture of iron oxide, aluminum, silicon dioxide, calcium oxide, and titanium dioxide.

Of those ingredients, the most toxic are iron oxide and aluminum. Iron oxide is a powerful carcinogen that promotes cancer growth, invasion, and metastasis. It is associated with degeneration of the brain and peripheral nerves, and can worsen a number of pre-existing diseases, such as pulmonary disorders, kidney disease, and heart failure. There is also evidence that iron oxide can worsen atherosclerosis — hardening of the arteries — which is a major cause of both heart attacks and strokes.

As this newsletter points out, aluminum is also a powerful toxin and can have long-term effects. Ironically, one of the effects of aluminum is release of blood iron from its protective carrier transferrin. This greatly increases the toxicity of the iron.

Another worry is just how much of the aluminum was nanoparticulate aluminum — that is, aluminum that is specifically made to be of such a small size that it can easily penetrate the skin, lungs, and GI tract, entering deep into the cells. Recent studies have shown that nanoparticulate aluminum is infinitely more toxic than natural aluminum.

Nanorizing of products has become all the rage in industry — but it is a double-edged sword. While it can greatly improve the absorption and distribution of medications and even natural nutrients in the body, it can also increase the concentration and toxicity of toxic metals and chemicals beyond anyone's imagination.

It is the stuff of spy and suspense novels.

aluminum adjuvant. That is a massive dose.

Another link between vaccines and neurodegenerative diseases is the incredibly high incidence of multiplesclerosis following the hepatitis B vaccine in adults. The best study found a 300 percent increase in the onset of MS within two years of receiving the HepB vaccine.

Dr. Marc Girard, the French doctor who first described macrophagic myofasciitis, has written a brilliant paper on this issue. It goes deep into how the vaccine industry hides data and tarnishes the reputation of anyone pointing out dangers of the vaccine.<sup>17</sup>

Each year the drug industry releases a new set of vaccines that it promotes for good health. The industry uses the CDC and other federal agencies to strongly promote their implementation. They also use state legislatures to implement mandatory vaccination for adults as well as children. (We see this with vaccine requirement for college entrance.) Of course, they pass a little money around to the legislators and laws get passed. I am always amazed how little money it takes to get politicians to sell out their constituents.

I cannot emphasize enough how important this issue is to your health. If the general public knew about the dangers of aluminum in vaccines, they would be terrified. Worse yet, most vaccines are now manufactured in China, and the FDA "inspects" these Chinese plants once every 12 years. Yet the inspectors are not allowed to actually enter the

plants — they must simply accept the communist officials' word that all is well and safe.

If the present trend in vaccination continues, we will see a nation of people so sick and mentally impaired that our survival as a nation will be at issue. We cannot continue to assault the brain with massive amounts of injected toxins and repeatedly assault the immune system in such a way and not expect to see a total collapse of our health. It cannot be sustained.

For those wanting more information, go to [www.russellblaylockmd.com](http://www.russellblaylockmd.com), where you can get copies of my published papers.

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