Dr. Mercola: Welcome everyone, this is Dr. Mercola. We’re here today for an update on the mercury issue with Charlie Brown. Many of you may remember him from being with us before. He is one of the leaders in the movement to eliminate mercury from dental amalgam. He’s been flying all over the world, representing this contingency, and has exciting updates for us that will really show the results of what can happen if you put your mind to it. Welcome aboard, Charlie.

Charlie Brown: Thank you Dr. Mercola, good to be here.

A Worldwide Effort to Eliminate Mercury Fillings

Dr. Mercola: All right. Why don’t you update us and tell us what’s going on?

Charlie Brown: I certainly will. The world is embarking on an exciting mission to do a treaty addressing mercury in all forms, with the ambition of ending anthropogenic (means man-made) mercury in all uses. Obviously, special interest is there to fight it, just to protect their use. The special interest trying to protect mercury fillings is, of course, the American Dental Association (ADA), and their world ally (which they fund), the World Dental Federation. The ADA continues to say that this primitive, polluting product from the pre-Civil War era is something that’s good. Of course, their reason is (another P word) nice profits for the unqualified dentists who refuse to get training to be mercury-free. As thousands of dentists of course, have already done, they’ve got the training.

We’re in the battle, not just in the United States—this is where it really gets promising—but on the world stage. There are five sessions that the world is convening for. Diplomacy is slow, the barriers, a lot of “Thank you sirs, thank you ma’am,” as you talk. But it is five sessions around the world, one continent after another, until they’ve hammered out a treaty. We are about to go to the third session in Africa and we now have breakthroughs even with our government in the United States. Clearly, Joe, the people that listen and respond to you have written the United States government and that message has gotten across. Our government has really changed its position on amalgam and very much for the better.

U.S. Government Agencies’ Stand on Dental Mercury Use

Dr. Mercola: When did this transition occur and what do you think it’s the result of?

Charlie Brown: Well, it’s just now. There’s no doubt it’s the result of the Grassroots. The Food and Drug Administration, until recently was {03:03 – 03:04} of the American
Dental Association. The Environmental Protection Agency was inert, not even addressing amalgam. The U.S. State Department was not a player, because there was no treaty.

Now, we have the U.S. State Department advising the world nations that the United States supports the end of amalgam. Albeit, in diplomatic words, eventual, they say we need to show alternatives exist. They do exist, but we need to show that.

The State Department has announced the world that the United States favors the end of amalgam. The Environmental Protection Agency has announced some time that they will regulate dental mercury for the first time. They will put rules on the release of dental mercury, which the pro-mercury dentists felt they could just dump down the drain and hand the bill to the taxpayers and water rate payers to clean it up.

The Food and Drug Administration, they signed on to this statement. It gives them credit. They didn’t veto the statement that says we need an end to amalgam. They didn’t veto the statement, which also said, and this is quite promising, that the world should no longer allow amalgam for pregnant women and children. That is as we phase it out (That may take a while). We stop its use for the most vulnerable, the children and pregnant women: The Food and Drug Administration let that statement go. They signed on to that statement, internationally, but they haven’t yet come to the table at home. They haven’t yet gone back to their own knitting, which is a rule to say pregnant women and children at least should not get amalgam. We look forward to that happening, but of course, we know that that won’t happen without citizen pressure and citizen input that’s been a key to a change in our U.S. government position.

**Dr. Mercola:** Our readers have been graciously cooperative in that effort and we’ll hopefully continue this, because it seems to be working. I think that’s the clear take-home message, that we can make a difference. It doesn’t take much time or much cost. So what can they do to further catalyze the transition to mercury-free dentistry?

**Charlie Brown:** I think they can thank the FDA for at least taking a position internationally. The key man is Jeff Shuren. Again, he still has to change the rule at the FDA. But the fact that:

1. He signed on to the international statement

2. He’s actually out in the field holding field hearings, listening to people. He was in Dallas in March, and he’ll be in Orlando on May 5th. Believe me, we’re going to have a turnout just like we did in Dallas. The Texans came last month and the Floridians will come next month.

The first thing is, people could write and thank Jeff Shuren at [Jeff.Shuren@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Jeff.Shuren@fda.hhs.gov).
The other thing they can do is contribute to our cause, Consumers for Dental Choice, my group. I’m the president of this world alliance and we lead the world delegation, which people come from five continents—they’re dentists, environmentalists, consumers of all races, both genders. We are there on the world stage, fighting the pro-mercury filling lobbyists. We need help, we need to get to Africa to the next meeting. We need to do work with low-income countries, island nations, and African nations to do the transition. We would be honored and we very much need your help. Go to our website and there’s a Donate cause, the third item down on the right side of the page.

The American Dental Association’s Response

Dr. Mercola: That’s terrific. It seems somewhat surprising that there hasn’t been more resistance from the American Dental Association to resist this announcement from the State Department. Or was there, and they are just overruled?

Charlie Brown: No, they are resisting like crazy, still. They just work in the dark. You don’t read about them because they have such a huge political action committee fund. They don’t want the M word used. If they start going public with their concerns, they have to get the word mercury out there in the press. We’re the ones that like to talk about mercury, they don’t. They even lie and call it “silver fillings”. They’re working inside, and they’re pretty panicked. They wrote the State Department and said, “Look, the FDA should be in charge of this, not the EPA.”

Well, first it’s an environmental treaty. Maybe the American Dental Association better ought to read the law here. Environmental issues are dealt with in the United States by the Environmental Protection Agency. Second, the Food and Drug Administration already said, “We’re not an environmental agency. EPA is the lead agency.” Their letters indicate some sense of real alarm. There was a world conference in Australia and—this was not a group of happy campers—they told their people that this treaty is going to have a major effect on dentistry. The treaty is only about mercury, so the major effect is that it’s bedtime for mercury amalgam.

I don’t mean to say this battle is over. Believe me, Joe, the battle looms ahead. The ADA and its world ally, the World Dental Federation, will be in Africa lobbying. They’re lobbying the State Department to back off what it’s done. Their cloud is enormous. Their money is enormous and they’ve got members everywhere. The treaty is not even at its halfway point in terms of number of sessions. We need to get our people for the treaty, we need to work in between, and we need the Grassroots working in the United States, and in Canada and Australia (those two governments have been very disappointing so far). We need our team in action. No, the ADA is far from done from this. They’re secretly working, but there’s a real sense of panic there. I think they see the beginning of the end.

Dr. Mercola: What about the FDA? In one of our early interviews was luring the public about the challenge that the deputy commissioner of the FDA—her first name is
Margaret, I don’t recall her last—who was deemed to have some conflict of interest in getting funding from the major supplier of mercury amalgam. Has she had any impact on this?

**Charlie Brown:** Well, she did. Commissioner Margaret Hamburg. But she has now then had to recuse herself.

**Dr. Mercola:** Oh, she did recuse herself? Wow, so that effort we did earlier worked.

**Charlie Brown:** It did, Joe.

**Dr. Mercola:** Wow, that’s great!

**Charlie Brown:** You have such an enormous number of readers and watchers, and people respond. I can assure you, when we send out a message, we don’t have the reach you have; you do and people do respond. They write the FDA, they write their congressmen and congresswomen, and yes, Margaret Hamburg recused herself from the rule. The man in charge now is Jeff Shuren. I did urge people to write Jeff at jeff.shuren@fda.hhs.gov and say, hey look, what you’ve done so far is really good but please, you have to compete the touchdown. The touchdown is doing what we’re asking the world to do.

**A Step in a New Direction for the FDA**

**Dr. Mercola:** So this is a little different take from when we first started this project. It was really getting the deputy commissioner out of there and we were successful. Now that she has a replacement, Jeff Shuren, it seems like he’s more aligned with the common sense logic and rational choices for maintaining human health. Do you have any other takes on him and what your projection or best guess intuition is with his cooperation with this effort?

**Charlie Brown:** I’ve battled the FDA for nine years now, Dr. Mercola, and I can tell you, whenever I make a prediction, they turn it on its head. But the direction right now is good; that’s happened before -- that the direction has been good. I think that Dr. Shuren has shown some very good signs. He did agree to reconsider the rule. We had some excellent hearings last December with the scientists. The scientists told the FDA to reverse course and stop amalgam right now for pregnant women and children. Dr. Shuren himself attended those hearings when he didn’t need to; he could have had staff do it. He’s gone out in the field to have hearings. I think all those are promising. He’s got his own bureaucracy though. That bureaucracy has an in-house dentist who’s determined to protect not the children or the unborn children but the profits of the dentists -- that’s been her mission ever since she went in the FDA.

Within the FDA, there is non-agreement. We’re hoping that Dr. Shuren will move forward. It’s been several months. The first sign, the first break or crack in the dam
clearly was the FDA agreeing that yes, the world should phase out amalgam and the world should stop amalgam use for children and for pregnant women. We’re definitely seeing a change in tone in the FDA. We now need a change in substance. We need them to actually change their rule and we’re not there yet. We’re not there at the treaty, we’re not there at the FDA but the public in America is rising up. In California, there was a city which said we want it banned right now, the city of Costa Mesa. The city council voted, you put that story up and it got 100,000 hits. Your story got 100,000 hits, Dr. Mercola, about the call for the end of amalgam and the grassroots movement in the state of California.

What You Can Do to Support the Anti-Amalgam Movement

Dr. Mercola: We’ll be successful ultimately but it seems the current project, as a recommendation for anyone listening to this, if you live in the United States and you have a few extra minutes -- it’s a different strategy and is really not going to cost you much time, effort, and energy and we’ll provide the specific details of the address and who it gets sent to – to really thank Jeff Shuren for what he’s done. Here’s the key: we don’t want it to be a template letter; we want it to be from your heart, a passionate, empathetic, and individualized response. You can cut and paste information that you’ve learned about in the Internet and put it there to support your statements, but really, give him some strong, individualized letters that will allow him to be convinced of the amount of concern that the public has about this issue.

Now remember: you are not doing this most likely for yourself and you probably may not even be doing it for your kids. You are doing it for your grandkids, for innocent women out there who don’t know about this and are going to be exposed to this toxin because they just don’t have enough insights -- and the government really isn’t really allowing them to be informed -- and because they’re going to have dangerous mercury toxins put in and their children will be damaged. So this is easy and a no-brainer and if you can just continue the process, we can be successful. So definitely make it individualized.

Charlie Brown: For our Canadian friends, Canada will not get off the dime. Joe, maybe you can put on the website the contact information for the head of the Canadian delegation, Margaret Kenney. We can supply that in writing if you’d like because I think that the Canadians need to say to their government, why don’t you start going to the United States. They’ve been ahead of us for years but now they’re behind us and trailing. Canada’s an incredible country and it’s time their leaders in Ottawa stood up to the pro-mercury amalgam industry, which they’re not now and not doing at all. You’ve got a lot of listeners and viewers in Canada, Jose, and I hope we can get the message to them to.

Dr. Mercola: Well, we’re definitely making progress in this area, especially in fluoride. It’s interesting that the majority of Canadians, I believe, do not have fluoride in their water supply. They’re really ahead of us and there’s a really good chance that they will eliminate fluoride from the entire country long before we do.
Charlie Brown: Water pollution is a key to this mercury treaty too. In Canada, the department of the environment, Environment Canada, heads up the treaty negotiations. We are doing an environmental treaty. That’s how we win. I think the health debate is a slamdunk but some people don’t think that. We’re just going to bypass the health debate and say that we’re going to stop the use of dental mercury for environmental reasons to avoid damage to the air, water, and land. That would be the great route.

Our website, Joe, is www.ToxicTeeth.org. Again, we ask people to help us win this world fight. Go to our website and find the word “donate” on the right side of the page and consider giving something.

Dr. Mercola: Okay, great. These are difficult economic times and if you’re fortunate enough to have extra resources, we strongly recommend that you support this noble cause. Even if you don’t, I implore you and beg you to take the time. In some cases, that’s even going to be more important because it’s definitely in the crucial and critical part of the equation. But on the other hand, it does take leaders like Charlie, who’s been flying all over the world. He was in Japan, in Europe, and now he’s going to South Africa?

Charlie Brown: It’s either going to be Kenya or Burkina Faso. The United Nations still has yet to decide that.

Dr. Mercola: Then you’ve got two countries after that. You just don’t go by yourself and take staff with you so there are certainly costs involved. This is a non-profit endeavor and I’m just so grateful that you’re committed to this. There are few individuals like you and it’s such a privilege to be able to get behind someone like you, who is doing such a noble cause and really taking the burden upon yourself, facilitating and coordinating because it really wouldn’t be happening without your efforts.

Charlie Brown: Well, I want to give thanks to my colleague at the treaty talks, Anita Vazquez Tibau from California. Anita’s trilingual and speaks English, Spanish, and Portuguese. She is our liaison with all the Americas, all the way down to the end of South America. She works with those delegates quite assiduously. We also have other colleagues from around the world, in Britain, the Philippines, the Ivory Coast, Lebanon, and New Zealand. We have an incredible team of men and women at the treaty talks versus the World Dental Federation, which frankly, Joe, is {17:47} by a bunch of white guys like you and me. They’re over their heads now, let me tell you.

Dr. Mercola: Well good. Thank you for coordinating and facilitating the whole process. I’m fairly convinced that we will be successful. I believe that but there’s still a lot work to be done. So if you can write that letter and provide your support to this cause, it will be greatly appreciated.

Any closing words, Charlie?
**Charlie Brown:** I just think that what you’re doing, Joe, in helping to get this message across and rallying people, it works. From the beginning, you said to me, “What is our message, what can people do?” You always tie that in to action, and action, in a democracy, imperfectly true but it does work.

**Dr. Joseph Mercola:** We have really ambitious goals to change the world and certainly, yours is one of them. It appears that eliminating the mercury in the environment, at least in the form of dental amalgam, will be one of our first successes, thanks to leaders like you. We really appreciate all that you’re doing and again, we want to get behind you 100 percent for your project.

**Charlie Brown:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Joseph Mercola:** Alright.