



January 15, 2001

## Ireland's second largest political party: Fine Gael promises to ban fluoride in drinking water

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FINE GAEL has pledged to end the controversial compulsory practice of adding fluoride to all drinking water because of "serious health concerns".

And, if elected, the party will also order every health board to investigate existing levels of fluoride in groundwater supplies.



"Fine Gael believes that there are sufficient grounds to point to serious health risks from the cumulative amount of fluoride in our piped water supply system," according to a new policy document drawn up by Environment spokesperson Ivan Yates.

It says there are deep environmental concerns about the current programme of fluoridation of the country's water supplies aimed at reducing tooth decay.

Less than 2% of Europe's population have fluoridated water and a number of countries had rejected, discontinued or banned the practice. The Dutch also introduced a constitutional amendment so that it could never be reintroduced while in the North 25 of 26 local authorities ceased the controversial addition to supplies.

Fine Gael said there were claims of allergic responses to fluoridated water including skin irritations, mouth ulcers, headaches, stomach upset and it could also cause irritable bowel syndrome.

Meanwhile, Green MEP, Patricia McKenna, hit out at what she claimed was "the forced administration of regular doses of fluoride, a toxic mixture, which has been shown to have many adverse health effects. "The doses of fluoride our body accumulates increase the risks of bone fractures, osteoporosis, bone cancer, and genetic damage," she claimed.

"The Government cannot continue to play the ostrich and ignore the bare medical facts as well as the public's opinion any longer," Ms McKenna added. She said that since fluoridation was first introduced back in the early '60s, not one survey has ever been carried out here on its impact on human health and the environment although this was a legal requirement.

Ms McKenna points out that an EU Convention agreed in 1997, stated that medical interventions cannot go ahead without the person's "free and informed consent".

The latest EPA report on drinking water shows that many water supplies here have excess levels of fluoride because the Government does not take into account the levels of fluoride already naturally present in water.

Most European countries have signed the Convention on Biomedicine and Human Rights and we had to follow suit. A number of local authorities have passed all party motions calling for an end to fluoridation the Minister for Health has set up a Forum on Fluoridation.