

bill to ban mercury in vaccines



Those opposed to the use of thimerosal in vaccines are calling for the support of the Mercury-Free Vaccine Act of 2004 (HR 4169). Sponsored by US Representatives Dave Weldon, MD (R-FL), and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), the bill seeks to enact an agreement reached in 1999 among the Public Health Service, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and vaccine manufacturers to remove the preservative thimerosal from vaccines. Composed of 50 percent mercury, thimerosal is a neurotoxin particularly harmful to the developing nervous systems of fetuses and infants. Today, despite the 1999 agreement, thimerosal remains an ingredient of a number of vaccines—including the newly recommended flu vaccine. According to Weldon, “This legislation is necessary to ensure that

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—US Rep. Carolyn Maloney

we don’t roll back the clock when it comes to eliminating this mercury exposure to developing fetuses and infants. We can eliminate this exposure now and it is inexcusable not to.” Maloney adds, “It’s a simple concept: kids shouldn’t be given anything that’s toxic. Who would argue with that? Vaccines can be made without mercury, so why not remove the mercury and remove any doubt?”

Specifically, HR 4169 requires that:

- by January 1, 2005, no childhood vaccine have more than 1 microgram (mcg) of mercury;
- the flu vaccine administered to children, beginning later this year with the 2004–05 flu season, have no more than 1 mcg mercury;
- by January 1, 2006, mercury be removed completely from all childhood and adolescent vaccines; and that
- no adult vaccines may contain more than 1 mcg of mercury after January 1, 2007.

The bill also states that the Centers for Disease Control should incorporate into its vaccine-promotion messages a recommendation against administering mercury-containing vaccines to pregnant women.

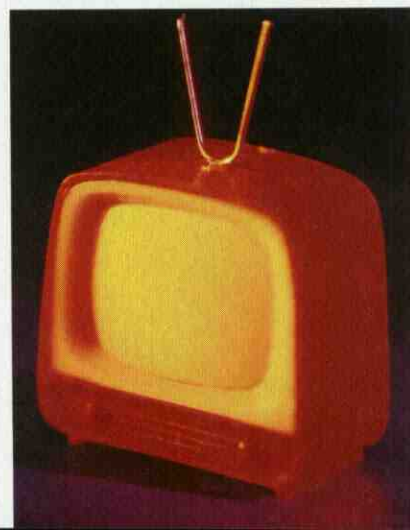
HR 4169 currently has five co-sponsors. To lend your support, call your representatives and ask them to cosponsor HR 4169. If they decline, ask them why. Request their continued support of the bill, if and when it reaches the House floor.

To find your representatives and their contact information, go to www.house.gov. To read the bill, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov> and enter “HR 4169” when prompted for “bill number.” For more information and background on the bill, go to www.house.gov/weldon.

another reason to turn **off** the TV

Many parents believe that television and children shouldn’t mix. A new study connecting attentional problems and TV supports their assertion. Recently published in the journal *Pediatrics*, the study used for its assessments the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth data set. Researchers discovered that children who watched television at ages one and three had attentional problems at age seven. The 1,278 one year olds in the data set watched an average of 2.2 hours of television per day, while the 1,345 three year olds watched an average of 3.6 hours per week. The association between early TV viewing and attentional problems existed, even while controlling for such factors as prenatal substance use and gestational age, maternal psychopathology, and socioeconomic status. Researchers concluded that “Limiting young children’s exposure to television as a medium during formative years of brain development consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics’ recommendations may reduce children’s subsequent risk of developing ADHD.”

D. A. Christakis, MD, MPH, F. J. Zimmerman, PhD, et al., “Early Television Exposure and Subsequent Attentional Problems in Children,” *Pediatrics* 113, no. 4 (April 2004): 708–713.



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