

Fluoride in water linked to cancer

ADDING fluoride to tap water can increase the risk of boys developing bone cancer, research has suggested.

An American study found that boys exposed to the chemical between the ages of five and ten were at greater risk of developing the disease between ten and 19.

Scientists from the Harvard School of Dental Medicine found fluoride does not pose the same risk to young girls, but have not worked out why.

The health benefits of putting fluoride in drinking water have been a subject of controversy for years.

Currently it is added to the water of around six million people in the UK – 10 per cent of the population – by health authorities in the Midlands and North-East.

The scientists say the risk of developing bone cancer was linked to fluoride levels common in the U.S. and UK.

Now the Environmental Working Group, a Washington-based research body which made the findings public, is calling for fluoride in tap water to be formally added to a U.S. government list of substances known or feared to be carcinogenic to humans.

Dr Vyvyan Howard, a senior toxicologist at the University of Liverpool, said the evidence of a link 'seems pretty strong'.

'At these ages the bones of boys are developing rapidly so if the bones are being put together abnormally because fluoride is altering the bone structure they're more likely to get cancer,' she explained.