

Silver is toxic!

Claims that it is safe have come primarily from the companies that make silver products - hardly a trustworthy source of unbiased information. Silver in any form is a bio-accumulative toxic metal, like mercury, lead, and arsenic. Its action as an antibiotic comes from the fact that it is a non-selective toxic "biocide."

It is known - and acknowledged - that long-term use of colloidal silver or silver salts deposits metallic silver under the skin, turning people's skin an ashen-gray color, an affliction known as argyria (see reference below). Argyria is considered permanent. It also accumulates in internal organs, continually exposing the cells of those organs to silver, wreaking unknown havoc, and it is likely that it actually interferes with the body's normal immune processes.

The former manufacturer of one of these products - Seasilver - actually claimed at the time that silver is an "essential" nutrient. This was an outright falsehood. The human body has no need or use for silver. The health claims made by the company - that it was an effective treatment for 650 different health problems - were so outrageous that they received a "cease and desist" order from the Federal Trade Commission in June, 2003, and now the company, allegedly "reconstituted," sells an innocuous product made from Aloe Vera, fruit juices, Pau D'Arco Extract, and some obscure sea herbs.

Silver as a historical antibiotic

Silver was used through the ages as a germ-killing agent because at those times they had few other choices. There were no antibiotics, and no natural germ-fighters had been discovered. Because people in general did not know that it was important to take large amounts of vitamin C (most people still don't), their immune systems were severely compromised for much of their lives. Thus silver was considered a life-saving medicine. Silver nitrate drops were used to prevent eye infections in newborns, for instance.

Silver was (appropriately) essentially dropped from use in the U.S. with the introduction of antibiotics and biochemical antiseptics, but suddenly gained popularity again in the 1990s. The FDA proposed banning silver in over-the-counter products in 1997, and issued a final rule in 1999, but never acted on it.

The silver manufacturers claim that they are not subject to any federal laws about safety because silver was used before the Food and Drug Act - that they are grandfathered. Of course this begs the question: so were lead and mercury preparations and many other extremely toxic "medicines" that have since been banned from commerce.

Silver has no purpose in the human body

Silver is not used in any known physiological process in the human body. It is treated by the body as a toxic metal, chelated and removed extremely slowly by proteins called metallothioneins. This removal process can easily be overwhelmed, leading to argyria. Silver has an affinity to cell membranes, including those of nerve cells, where it deposits permanently as silver sulfide. This is a typical pattern of heavy metal toxicity.

Colloidal Silver proponents claim their product is safe

The people who promote colloidal silver claim their products are safe because their silver is "different." The people who promote silver proteins and metallic silver say the same thing about their products. Think about these claims in the context of the previous paragraph. Whether the silver enters the body as a colloid in suspension or as metallic silver or as integrated into a protein, the human body treats it the same way - as a foreign object made of a toxic metal - and the removal process is the same.

Silver causes immune dysfunction

When the human immune and detoxification system encounters a foreign, non-metabolic metal such as silver, it goes into overdrive in its attempt to detoxify and remove it, as described above. Glutathione, the primary detoxifying antioxidant, is utilized in this process. If the person has a chronic illness such as hepatitis C, the glutathione that had been utilized in detoxifying free radical toxins is now siphoned off into silver detoxification. The result could be a sudden progression of the disease, the exact opposite of what the silver proponents claim. **This actually happened to one of my clients: he took colloidal silver and his ALT and AST counts suddenly increased, indicating disease progression.**

Silver is unnecessary

To put this debate more in perspective, even if it were safe, silver is also completely unnecessary. If people were to take sufficient vitamin C and other immune support nutrients, their immune systems would be strong enough to fight off most bacterial and fungus attacks. People who take large quantities of vitamin C each day rarely get ill, and when they do the course of the illness is much shorter and milder. For extremely virulent diseases, there are safe natural antibiotics and anti-fungal agents that are much more powerful and potent than silver that are derived from food and medicinal herbs.

Andrographis, resveratrol, green tea extract, turmeric extract, oregano oil, and olive leaf extract are good examples of natural antibiotics that also have other, health-promoting features. Both green tea extract and turmeric extract are also potent selective chemotherapeutic agents for cancer - they cause cancer cells to self-destruct - and they are also powerful anti-inflammatory aids. Oregano oil and olive leaf extract have been shown to effectively kill pathogenic bacteria, viruses, funguses, and protozoa such as malaria, and they have been helpful in treating the opportunistic infections of AIDS victims.

This is one of the few times when I believe the government should act to ban a health "supplement." Silver is fine for coins and jewelry (although for earrings it should have a stainless steel hook for pierced ears). But silver compounds should not be sold in products that people consume. I believe silver is a clear and present danger to anyone who consumes it. Furthermore, having this "supplement" available provides ammunition for the drug companies and other anti-natural supplement forces for full FDA regulation of supplements, which would kill the entire natural supplement industry.

Source: <http://www.cqs.com/silver.htm>