

FLUORIDE IN HUMAN BREAST MILK

The 2006 National Research Council (NRC) report *Fluoride in drinking water: a scientific review of EPA's standards* notes that measured fluoride ion (F) levels in samples of human breast milk are very low.¹ The mean values reported were 0.0053 mg F/L in colostrum (Spak et al. 1983 with 0.2 mg F/L in drinking water), 0.0068 mg F/L in colostrum (Spak et al. 1983 with 1.0 mg F/L in drinking water), 0.007 mg F/L in mature milk (Spak et al. 1983 with 1.0 mg F/L in drinking water), 0.0044 mg F/L in mature milk (Dabeka et al. 1986 with nonfluoridated communities), 0.0098 mg F/L in mature milk (Dabeka et al. 1986 with 1.0 mg F/L in drinking water), 0.033 mg F/L, range 0.011–0.073 mg F/L in mothers' milk (Opinya et al. 1991 with a mean intake of 22.1 mg F/day from drinking water), and 0.0046±0.0025 (mean±SD) mg F/L, range 0.002–0.01 mg F/L in breast milk (Hossny et al. 2003 with 0.3 mg F/L in drinking water). Even at very high F intakes by mothers of up to 22.1 mg F/day, breast milk still contained very low concentrations of F compared with other dietary F sources with, for all the studies quoted, means of 0.0044–0.033 mg F/L and a range of 0.002–0.073 mg F/L.

In contrast, a paper in the present issue by Poureslami et al.² found the mean amount of F in the breast milk of mothers with dental fluorosis and children with dental fluorosis, in the high altitude (>2000 m) city of Koohbanan, Iran, was 0.550 mg F/L (ppm) which is 16.7 times higher than the highest mean value of 0.033 mg F/L found in the NRC review. The mean level of F in the breast milk in the control group of mothers in Koohbanan who did not have dental fluorosis and had children without dental fluorosis was 0.006 mg F/L, which is within the usual range for means reported in the NRC report of 0.0044–0.033 mg F/L and the same as the level found by Şener et al., in 2007 in Turkey, of 0.006±0.002 mg F/L.³

Although Campus et al. also found, in 2014 in Italy, a similar high breast milk F value of 0.515 mg F/L in mothers given a F supplement, they also measured a high level of 0.476 mg F/L in a control group and considered that their high values were probably related to the F measurement method they used.⁴ Thus, the normal F level in the control group of Poureslami et al. of 0.006 mg F/L² suggests that the high value of 0.550 mg F/L they found in the mothers with fluorosis is not due to a technical error and raises the possibility that there is more to understand about the factors affecting the level of F in breast milk such as the effect of altitude.

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REFERENCES

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