

Attached is the entire article about colloidal silver that appeared in the August/07 issue of The Harvard Medical School Health Letter. (A subscription newsletter for the medical profession). A media release promoting this article promised 'serious and strange side effects'. If this is typical of the the quality of the information that doctors read then its no wonder they know almost nothing about colloidal silver, and what they do know is usually wrong.

As proof that we should be very wary of consuming small doses of low ppm (10 - 30 ppm) colloidal silver because it will turn us blue they cite the following 'research'.

- 1935 research into the use of Argyrol... Highly concentrated (about 30,000ppm) silver protein nosedrops that are no longer readily available. (This is probably the stuff that Rosemary Jacobs took lots of over 50 years ago.) This is not a product that would commonly be called 'colloidal silver' today.
- The 1932 case of a Barnum and Bailey circus attraction who had an estimated 100 grams of silver in his body and probably worked in a silver mine. This certainly is not 'colloidal silver'
- A single case from the early 80's of argyria caused by the use of 'stop-smoking' lozenges containing silver acetate. This may simply have been blue gums but it doesn't say, anyway it's not a product that would commonly be called 'colloidal silver' today.
- Silver spots left by heavy use of acupuncture needles. This has got nothing to do with colloidal silver.
- AND HERES THE SHOCKING CLINCHER (With a picture!).....
Black marks on the finger of a bank employee who handled banknotes that were covered in an anti-theft coating. In other words this product was INTENTIONALLY FORMULATED with concentrated silver nitrate to leave a stain on skin to identify bank robbers! Again, this has got nothing to do with colloidal silver.
- The only example remotely relevant to the the consumption of modern colloidal silver (but cited without any references) is the 2006 case of man who looked 'cyanotic' because he drank colloidal silver made with 'water' and baking soda.
We've known for at least 10 years now that you don't just use any old 'water', you use the highest quality purified, distilled or demineralised water you can find. And you never add anything to the brew. Not baking soda. Not salt. Nothing.

So the the truth is (and this Harvard Health article unintentionally proves it) if you drink nice clear colloidal silver made with pure water, the risk of argyria is very small!

The complete article follows. (The comments in blue are mine)



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Harvard Health Letter | August 2007

Taking silver could give you the blues

Silver is less toxic than some other metals...but do you look good in blue?

A reader wrote asking us whether there is "any legitimate reason" for taking colloidal silver. The short answer: No. The longer version follows.

(So this 'report' is really just a response to a Letter to the Editor. It provides no references, and the author is unnamed).

You may remember from high school chemistry that colloids (pronounced KOL-oids) are mixtures in which one substance is divided into tiny particles and dispersed throughout another one. The particles are so small that they resist gravity and stay suspended. Colloidal silver consists of silver particles in water.

Colloidal silver is peddled as a cold medicine, decongestant, all-around germ fighter, and, in the extreme, a kind of cure-all. It's classified as a dietary supplement, so it doesn't need to meet the safety and efficacy standards the FDA sets for drugs. The FDA has warned some Web sites about making medical claims for colloidal silver, but there's nothing illegal about selling it. You can buy colloidal silver not only from all sorts of no-name Web sites, but also through some well-known online retailers like www.drugstore.com.

(Peddled? ... I think some bias is already showing here)

The pre-antibiotic

Silver has a long, checkered history in medicine. For centuries, doctors told their patients that swallowing it would cure everything from epilepsy to mental illness to stomach ulcers. Despite some of the claims being made for colloidal silver, we can safely dismiss those uses as potentially dangerous nonsense from a bygone era. (A cure for epilepsy and mental illness? That's news to me. They are really trawling into the dark ages to find negatives. Of course its nonsense, but its hardly 'dangerous'.

But silver does kill germs, and, by some accounts, silver nitrate was the very first effective antibacterial agent. Starting in the late 19th century, doctors moved away from having their patients swallow silver (although silver arsphenamine was still used to treat syphilis) and toward using it in topical ointments and solutions. William Halsted, the father of modern surgery, applied silver foil and gauze to wounds to prevent infection. (The fact that silver kills germs is absolutely beyond doubt.

Silver was far less irritating and toxic than some other disinfecting substances, so it was often used to treat eye and nose infections. Argyrol, a compound of silver and a protein extracted from wheat, was especially popular and used in everything from nasal sprays to suppositories. (Few people have heard of Argyrol today, but it did make a lasting impression on the art world. Dr. Albert Coombs Barnes amassed a great fortune as owner of the company that sold Argyrol, and the art collection that bears his name is world famous.)

Silver compounds, topical and otherwise, started to fall out of favor in the 1930s and '40s primarily because antibiotics like penicillin came along. (Yes, antibiotics that are now becoming ineffective.)

One clear example of the change: obstetricians once smeared the eyes of newborns with a silver nitrate ointment to prevent gonorrhea and chlamydia infections that could cause blindness. Now most use antibiotic drops, such as erythromycin, instead.

Silver still has several uses in conventional medicine. Silver sulfadiazine, a sulfa drug made with silver, is used to treat serious second- and third-degree burns. Fabric impregnated with silver is sometimes used as a dressing for wounds, skin infections, and after surgery. And silver nitrate is occasionally used to treat warts and corns.

Doesn't help. Could hurt.

With colloidal silver, it seems as though we've come full circle, as people are once again ingesting silver for medicinal purposes. The labels of the colloidal products we've seen suggest taking it in small amounts — an ounce and a half or less a day. The silver content is given in parts per million, which works out to be several hundred micrograms (mcg) per ounce. That's about 10 times the Environmental Protection Agency's guidelines for silver in drinking water.

(The guidelines are just very safe guesses. No research has ever established that silver in drinking water has presented any danger to humans.)

There are minute amounts of silver throughout the environment, so we're bound to ingest some. According to one estimate, the oral intake of silver from a typical diet is 27 mcg to 88 mcg a day.

Given silver's germicidal history, and the frightening reality of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, it's understandable that people might think (we musn't have that!) or be open to a sales pitch that gets them thinking, that colloidal silver could step in as the "superantibiotic" and do wonders. But there's really no proof — none — that it has any benefits.

(Huh?...hasn't the first half of this article talked about how doctors used it for years before antibiotics like penicillin arrived? But if you want proof, How about few thousand testimonials? But of course that's not proof. Only clinical trials costing mega-bucks are accepted as proof - but who's going to pay for those?)

As for harm, silver is considerably less toxic than lead, mercury, and some other metals. Although some animal experiments suggest that it might cross the blood-brain barrier, brain and nerve damage from silver exposure is rare. (Rare? Wheres the example? How about just admitting that such cases are non-existent? There's no proof that silver has caused any such thing in humans.)

On-the-job exposure hasn't been a major problem, partly because metallic silver isn't absorbed very well and is quickly excreted. (So in fact what is being said here is that silver is very safe).

Still, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (which is part of the National Institutes of Health) warns that colloidal silver can cause kidney damage, stomach distress, and headaches, among other problems

(Yes the NCCAM 'warns' but actually they have no proof. It's just a theory based on old experiments where rats were fed heavy doses of silver nitrate for 150 days straight til they started to get a bit stressed. It's been estimated that a human would have to drink about 18 gallons of colloidal silver A DAY to reach anywhere near that silver intake) .

Got them silver blues

But the most common problem associated with silver exposure is argyria (pronounced ar-JIR-ee-ah): The skin turns a bluish gray because of the accumulation of granules of silver, usually as silver sulfide, in the skin. The silver seems to stimulate the production of melanin, so areas of the skin exposed to sunlight get especially dark. The conjunctiva (the clear membrane that covers the white part of the eye, or sclera) and internal organs may also be affected. Once the silver is deposited, there's no way of getting it out, so the discoloration may be permanent.

(The above explanation is completely wrong. Silver isn't a tanning aid! It's got nothing to do with the stimulation of melanin. Argyria is caused when sufficient numbers of large silver particles impregnate the skin.

Argyria is now very rare. Compared to old style, chemically made colloidal silver, today's good quality 'electrolytic' colloidal silver today has a very low silver content and the particles are extremely small.)

Argyria was more common when silver compounds were widely used as medicines. In 1935, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* published an article that identified 70 cases, many of them in children. The authors decried the "alarming increase" in argyria from silver-based medicine and pointed the finger at Argyrol and other products. Long before the Blue Man Group, there was Barnum and Bailey Circus's "blue man," whose skin was a deep blue — and not painted to look that way. After he died in 1923, the doctors who conducted the autopsy estimated that he had 100 grams of silver in his body. How it got there is unclear, although a friend told his doctors he had worked in silver mines. (This has got almost nothing to do with colloidal silver)

The occasional case of argyria continued to pop up even after silver-based medicines faded. In the early 1980s, there was a case report about a woman whose skin turned blue from smoking-cessation lozenges containing silver acetate. (That's got almost nothing to do with colloidal silver)

Heavy use of silver acupuncture needles has left bluish spots on people's bodies, although most acupuncture these days is done with stainless steel needles. (That's got nothing to do with colloidal silver). As part

of its "medical mystery" series, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published a report in 2007 of a bank employee whose fingertips suddenly developed black spots. It turned out the bills that she had been counting were covered with petroleum jelly and silver nitrate, which gets into the skin and is used to identify thieves. (That's got nothing to do with colloidal silver)



Spot check

Black spots appeared on a bank teller’s fingers after she handled bills with an anti-theft coating that included silver nitrate. The spots were caused by silver absorbed through the skin.

Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*, May 31, 2007, p. 2328.

Will the colloidal silver products currently on the market turn you blue? If you use them for a short time and in the recommended amounts, probably not. But people do overdo it, and case reports of argyria caused by heavy use are getting published by the medical journals.

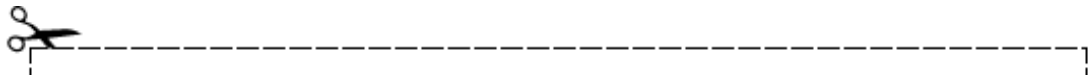
Late in 2006, for example, doctors in northern California reported the case of a 59-year-old man whose doctor sent him to the emergency department because he looked cyanotic — the bluish color people turn when they’re not getting enough oxygen. It turned out that he had ingested colloidal silver two or three times a year for the past two years whenever he felt a cold coming on. He had made his own homemade version of the solution (colloidal silver is expensive) using silver wire he bought from a health food store, water, baking soda, and an electric current.

(The solution is simple. To make the safest colloidal silver, use the purest water you can find and never add anything to it.)

END OF ARTICLE

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