
National Council Against Health Fraud

119 Foster Street, Bldg. R, 2nd Floor, Peabody, MA 01960
(978) 532-9383 ||| www.ncahf.org ||| ncahf.office@verizon.net



Policy Statement on Chelation Therapy

Chelation therapy is a series of intravenous infusions of disodium EDTA plus various other substances. It is sometimes done by swallowing EDTA or other agents in pill form. Proponents claim that chelation is effective against coronary artery disease, peripheral vascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, autism, and many other serious medical problems. However:

- No well-designed research has shown that chelation can help any of these conditions.
- Several well-designed studies have yielded negative results.
- Further use has no scientifically plausible rationale.
- Using chelation instead of proven treatments (such as coronary bypass surgery) can have fatal consequences.

Many chelation therapists use hair analysis or other bogus laboratory tests to diagnose nonexistent “poisoning” with lead, mercury, or other heavy metals. Although chelation therapy can be used to treat actual heavy metal poisoning, genuine chelation therapy uses calcium EDTA and a much shorter timetable.

Many chelation therapists submit insurance reports claiming to have treated lead poisoning or another alleged toxic state. However, most

insurance companies detect the fraud, so that the client is responsible for the costs.

Some chelationists allege that childhood autism is caused by mercury toxicity and treatable with chelation. However, there is no scientific evidence that autism has a toxic cause or is associated with abnormal levels of heavy metals.

Some chelationists claim to treat “mercury poisoning” produced by amalgam dental fillings. However, the mercury in amalgam is chemically bound so that significant amounts do not enter the body.

In 1998, the Federal Trade Commission secured a consent agreement barring the leading chelationist organization from falsely advertising that chelation therapy is effective against atherosclerosis or any other circulatory problem. The agreement is binding only on the group itself, not its individual members.

The National Council Against Health Fraud believes that chelation therapy is unethical and should be banned and that chelation therapy of autistic children should be considered child abuse.

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