

The **PINK DISEASE SUPPORT GROUP** is a not-for-profit medical support group founded by HEATHER THIELE of Gilgandra, Australia in 1989. Heather, a twin, had Pink Disease as a child and had numerous health problems which were 'dismissed' by her doctors. Her twin, who didn't have Pink Disease, was healthy. Heather wondered if her health problems were the long term side effects of Pink Disease and decided to investigate. She gathered numerous articles on the subject, got in touch with hundreds of people who had had Pink Disease and gathered a large amount of information from those people via surveys and letters. Heather was the only survivor of the 19 children in her district that had Pink Disease.

PINK DISEASE is babyhood mercury poisoning caused by a hyper-sensitive or abnormal reaction to mercury. Pink Disease is also known as infantile acrodynia, erythoedema, Feer's disease and Swift's disease.

In the past, the most commonly used product containing mercury **was** teething powder, but other products frequently used on babies also contained mercury. About 1 in 500 babies exposed to mercury-containing products got Pink Disease.

After mercury was removed from all teething powders and many other baby products in the 1950's, Pink Disease became even rarer. There were, and still are, numerous other household, industrial, natural, agricultural, medical and environmental sources of mercury.

Pink Disease was and still is a very nasty disease. The severity and duration of the disease varies. In the English speaking western world, the age of onset is usually between 6-14 months. The age of onset was older in Europe and the major cause was worming chocolate that contained mercury.

The symptoms of Pink Disease are those of babyhood mercury poisoning and they are diverse, complex and sometimes fatal.

SYMPTOMS – babies and toddlers:

1. Skin develops an itchy, burning rash and then peels off in layers.
2. Scratching and tearing at skin and sucking and chewing of fingers.
3. Abnormal skin and muscle sensations.
4. Photophobia (extreme light sensitivity).
5. Muscle weakness (hypotonia).
6. Clumsiness (ataxia).
7. Digestive problems, loss of weight, loss of appetite, vomiting and constipation.
8. Cold, clammy, swollen pink or bluish hands and feet & numbness of the extremities.
9. Anaemia.
10. Hair pulling and/or loss of hair.
11. Teeth loosen and/or fall out.
12. Convulsive seizures and petit mal attacks.
13. Elevated temperature, blood pressure and pulse rate and profuse sweating.
14. Low blood sodium level (hyponatremia).
15. Lung problems & broncho-pneumonia.
16. Extreme lethargy and misery.

Milder abortive versions of Pink Disease also occur in infants. The symptoms of PD in children 2 years and older are much the same as those for babies except they are generally a bit more subtle: irritability, failure to gain weight, sleeplessness and lack of energy are most noticeable. Photophobia and the pinkness of the hands and feet which is so

prominent in babies are not as noticeable but coldness and moistness of the extremities is evident and hypotonia and hypertension are detectable and the child becomes listless, doesn't smile, and doesn't want to play anymore and may simply sit around and rest all day. The older child can become asocial, talk infrequently and be bad tempered, difficult and even violent.

Pink Disease sufferers who were walking at the time of onset often became unable to walk due to the severity of the loss of muscle tone. Those who hadn't started to walk before the onset of the disease tend to start walking later than average.

It is estimated that between 10% and 33% of babies who got Pink Disease died but anecdotal evidence puts the death rate much higher. Death usually occurred as a result of secondary infections such as broncho-pneumonia or circulatory collapse due to hyponatremia or very high fever.

It is generally accepted that exposure to mercury is the cause of Pink Disease along with some other predisposing factor, such as hypersensitivity to mercury, a molecular malfunction, immaturity or malfunction of the adrenal medulla, or prior illness. Susceptibility to Pink Disease could be either genetic or epigenetic.

THE LONG TERM SIDE EFFECTS OF PINK DISEASE are the same as those for mercury poisoning. An information gathering exercise carried out by the Pink Disease Support Group indicates that those who had Pink Disease have much poorer general health than other people of their own age and gender, in particular a much higher incidence of bronchiectasis.

Common health gremlins include:

1. Eye problems including extreme light sensitivity, night blindness, aching eyes and visual problems.
2. Mouth and throat problems such as difficulty swallowing, unexplained coughing fits, a persistent cough, swollen glands, excessive cavities and the early loss of their teeth.
3. Muscle and bone problems including painful muscles and ligaments, arthritic problems, poor muscle tone and muscle weakness, poor circulation, numbness and other problems with the hands and feet.
4. Skin problems such as sun sensitivity, dryness, rashes, solar dermatitis and paleness.
5. Lung problems including bronchiectasis (about 30%), asthma, and unexplained breathlessness.
6. Co-ordination difficulties such as clumsiness, poor verbal and physical co-ordination.
7. General health problems including an increased incidence of anaemia, headaches, migraines, a poor immune system and fatigue.
8. Lack of emotional well-being due to depression, shyness, nervousness, lack of confidence, aloofness, forgetfulness, anxiety, social phobia, and a higher than average rate of psychiatric illness, particularly for those who have bronchiectasis.
9. **Mercury hyper-sensitivity.**

BRONCHIECTASIS

Over 30% of people who had Pink Disease have been diagnosed as having bronchiectasis. Bronchiectasis is a serious lung disease in which the bronchi of the lungs widen irreversibly, usually as a result of an infection of the bronchial tree leading to obstruction of the bronchi. Because of the obstruction of the bronchi, lung secretions accumulate, become infected and weaken the walls of the bronchi which dilate.

Causes of the infection include Whooping Cough, Pink Disease, pneumonia, measles, tuberculosis and cancer. There is also an inherited form of Bronchiectasis. The disease usually starts in childhood but may not show itself until adulthood. As well as coughing up large amounts of putrid secretions, the symptoms may include -

1. low grade fever;
2. breathlessness and hypoxia;
3. cyanosis (bluish skin colour);
4. deterioration of health with night sweats;
5. severe chronic bronchitis and asthma;

TREATMENT involves getting rid of the secretions which have accumulated in the dilated bronchi. This usually involves the use of antibiotics and postural drainage, but in some cases, part or all of the diseased lung is removed.

Postural drainage involves using the force of gravity to help the sufferer cough up the sputum by lying with his/her upper body over the edge of the bed. This allows the sputum to drain to the trachea (windpipe) and be coughed up.

PINK DISEASE and BRONCHIECTASIS



Website – www.pinkdisease.com

Facebook Group -
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1719244788294109/>