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Subject: Talc
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From: Ceil Sinnex <ceil@ILHAWAII.NET>

Studies linking use of talc powder in the genital area to increased risk of ovarian cancer have been reported in the medical literature ever since the 1930s. But due to the general apathy about ovarian cancer, this suspected link shows up periodically as "news." Two citizen petitions have been filed with the FDA requesting carcinogenic labeling on cosmetic talc powders, to my knowledge. The first was rejected, and I believe the FDA failed to reply to the second. The Cosmetic, Toiletry & Fragrance Association is strongly opposed to such labeling; a 1994 FDA meeting on health effects of talc was dominated by the cosmetic industry.

Ceil Sinnex
+ Ovarian Plus: Gynecologic Cancer Prevention Newsletter
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Ovarian Cancer and Talc Powder

A Sixty-Year Scandal of Informed Neglect

For more than 60 years, the use of talc-containing powders in the genital area has been under suspicion for increasing the risk of ovarian cancer. Yet major cosmetics companies still sell powders containing talc, a medically and cosmetically unnecessary substance that is chemically similar to asbestos.

- **An Old Secret:** The link was first reported in the 1930s, and has been the subject of medical research for well over 60 years. It is considered "suspected," and not "proven" a distinction invoked by talc apologists as an excuse...a meaningless distinction in context of medical practice.
- **Informed Neglect:** Cosmetics companies are well aware of the reports. Industrialists represented more than half of the "participants" in a Food & Drug Administration (FDA) workshop on talc and health in 1994.
- **Informed Disdain:** The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is well aware of it, too. Why did the FDA reject the first citizen petition requesting carcinogenic labeling of talc powders? Why did FDA stack its 1994 workshop with industrialists? Why was R.J. Reynolds Tobacco invited to participate?
- **High Stakes:** Ovarian cancer, America's leading cause of gynecologic cancer death, is on the rise, killing more women every year than the year before--a projected 14,800 in 1996. There is no reliable early detection test. Five-year survival: Caucasians, 39 percent; African-Americans, 36 percent.
- **Uncle Sam In Love:** FDA correspondence to US Senator Daniel Akaka on behalf of Cecil Sinnex in 1993 praised the alleged wonders of the caustic substance: "Talcum powder...is one of the most widely used toiletries ...because of its absorbent, mildly water-repellent, anti-chafing properties as well as the improvement in skin feel (i.e., 'slip') imparted to the skin."

If Uncle Sam is selling cancer, on whom can we rely?

OVARIAN PLUS International Newsletter is published by Cecil Sinnex, the world's first ovarian cancer advocate, fighting for our rights since 1990.

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