

Health & Fit

Ojai Valley News

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Germanium explored for medicinal uses



George Meinig, DDS

Special to the News

Dear Dr. Meinig:

What can you tell us about germanium? There seems to be a lot of ads about it and some even claim it is good for cancer.

— L.P.

Dear L.P.:

The use of germanium was proposed as a treatment for cancer by Dr. Kayuhiko Asai at a meeting of the International College of Applied Nutrition in 1977. I was at that meeting and heard Dr. Asai's lecture.

Asai was a mining engineer with no medical training who had the task of identifying the various ingredients in Japanese coal. He fell in love with its content of germanium and did considerable research about the element's properties.

The book of Alexis Carrel, "Journey to Lourdes," about the miracle cures people reported to have achieved after visiting the famous French springs and grotto further stimulated Asai's interest when tests he made of its water were found to have 30 p.p.m. of germanium. He felt the fabulous cures at Lourdes were mainly due to the germanium contents of its springs.

From 1977 supplements of germanium were sold in Japan, but only small amounts were available directly to doctors in the U.S. In 1986, Stephen A. Le-

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vine, Ph.D., brought germanium 132 (GE-132), a synthetic form, to the United States for a collective group of manufacturers and importers.

The original claims for the use of germanium was its role in stimulating the immune system, its enhancement of the use of oxygen by tissues and, thirdly, its antiviral and antifungal properties. Numbers of glowing stories are now being publicized about its possible cure of a variety of illnesses including analgesic effects, arthritis pain control, emphysema, chronic fatigue and allergies.

A few years ago Parrish M. Kidd, Ph.D., set up the Germanium Institute of North America. He was enthused about this element's possible use in the treatment of AIDS, cancer and other diseases. In a recent article, he told how his institute took the lead in developing and implementing protocols that would assure the purity and safety of GE-132.

In late 1987, they obtained samples from manufacturers around the world, all of whom represented their products as being of high purity. Dr. Kidd was surprised to find the majority tested were less than 98 percent pure. The Germanium Institute thereupon began issuing warnings that GE-132 could be toxic. In fact, two deaths and a number of cases of irreversible kidney damage have been reported.

All cases of such toxicity have been attributed to contamination from germanium dioxide used in its synthesis. This is further complicated because this starting material can also be contaminated with heavy metals that are very toxic to humans. Additional toxins can occur if catalysts such as acrylates, used in the manufacturing process, aren't removed in the purification processing.

Both Drs. Kidd and Levine strongly assert that it is the failure to remove the impurities that was responsible for the kidney failure side-effects that occurred. They contend that when the product is properly and fully purified and it is used in quantities of less than 2000 milligrams per day, that there is no danger in its use.

Drs. Kidd and Levine are in total agreement that GE-132 is a unique, health-giving substance, remarkable for its lack of toxicity **when in the pure form.**

It behooves those who use germanium to be sure of their source of supply.

Everyone has a question about nutrition. Send yours to Dr. George E. Meinig, c/o Ojai Valley News, Box 277, Ojai, CA 93024.

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