

Fluoridation Facts

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Fluoridation of community water supplies is the single most effective public health measure to prevent dental decay.
- Throughout more than 60 years of research and practical experience, the overwhelming weight of credible scientific evidence has consistently indicated that fluoridation of community water supplies is safe.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has proclaimed community water fluoridation (along with vaccinations and infectious disease control) as one of ten great public health achievements of the 20th century.
- More than 100 national and international health, service and professional organizations recognize the public health benefits of community water fluoridation for preventing dental decay.
- Studies prove water fluoridation continues to be effective in reducing dental decay by 20-40%, even in an era with widespread availability of fluoride from other sources, such as fluoride toothpaste.
- Community water fluoridation benefits everyone, especially those without access to regular dental care. It is the most efficient way to prevent one of the most common childhood diseases- dental decay (5 times as common as asthma and 7 times as common as hay fever in 5-to-17-year-olds). Without fluoridation, there would be many more than the estimated 51 million school hours lost per year in this country because of dental-related illness.
- Community water fluoridation is the adjustment of fluoride that occurs naturally in water to optimal levels to protect oral health.
- For most cities, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs.
- Water that has been fortified with fluoride is similar to fortifying salt with iodine, milk with vitamin D and orange juice with vitamin C.
- Simply by drinking water, people can benefit from fluoridation's cavity protection whether they are at home, work or school.
- The average cost for a community to fluoridate its water is estimated to range from approximately \$0.50 a year per person in large communities to approximately \$3.00 a year per person in small communities.
- More than two-thirds of the population in the United States are served by public water systems that are optimally fluoridated.
- In the past five years (2000 through 2004), more than 125 U.S. communities in 36 states have voted to adopt fluoridation.
- Fluoridation has been thoroughly tested in the United States' court system, and found to be a proper means of furthering public health and welfare. No court of last resort has ever determined fluoridation to be unlawful.
- Be aware of misinformation on the Internet and other junk science related to water fluoridation.
- One of the most widely respected sources for information regarding fluoridation and fluorides is the American Dental Association. The ADA maintains Fluoride and Fluoridation Web pages at <http://www.ada.org/goto/fluoride>

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