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FLUORIDATION

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Community Water Fluoridation



THE #1 WAY TO PREVENT DENTAL DECAY

ALABAMA
FLUORIDATION

What is Community Water Fluoridation?

All drinking water supplies contain some fluoride naturally. Getting the right amount of fluoride is important to prevent tooth decay. Water plant operators continuously monitor the fluoride content of drinking water in communities that fluoridate.

The most favorable concentration for fluoride in drinking water in the United States varies from **0.7 parts-per-million (ppm) in hot climates to 1.2 ppm in cold climates. For moderate climates, 1 ppm is recommended. (One ppm is the same as 1 mg/L.)**

Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the fluoride content that occurs naturally in a community's water to the best level for preventing tooth decay.

What are the Benefits of Community Water Fluoridation?

Hundreds of studies conducted in the United States and other countries during the past 60 years show that community water fluoridation prevents tooth decay. Because fluoride is so successful in preventing decay, it is incorporated into many dental care products, such as toothpastes and mouthrinses. Most people in non-fluoridated communities now receive some protection against cavities from fluoride in these dental care products and in food and beverages processed in fluoridated communities. Although people living in non-fluoridated communities have benefited from these other sources of fluoride, those living in fluoridated communities generally experience 18-40% less tooth decay.

The measurable benefits of water fluoridation are:

- 18 to 40 percent less dental decay in persons of all ages.
- More children free of dental decay.
- Fewer children having permanent teeth extracted because of decay.
- More adults keeping their teeth for a lifetime.
- Prevention and reversal of early stages of tooth decay in adults.
- Older adults less likely to develop decay on the roots of their teeth.
- Lower dental bills for repairing decayed teeth.
- Less need for procedures that require anesthesia and drilling.

Why Fluoridate?

It has been demonstrated that fluoride's action in preventing tooth decay provides a benefit to both children and adults throughout their lives.

Benefits of fluoridation include:



Prevents Cavities



Prevents Pain



Saves Money

Do Adults Benefit from Drinking Fluoridated Water?

It is a popular misconception that fluoridation helps only children. 35% among adults, as well as children, benefit from drinking fluoridated water throughout their lives. Because of water fluoridation, people are enjoying a lifetime of healthier teeth.

Why is Community Water Fluoridation an ideal Public Health Method?

Community water fluoridation is effective, safe, inexpensive, and practical. The average cost of fluoridation is about .62 cents per person a year. This is one of the best bargains in health today! The entire community benefits from community water fluoridation, regardless of a person's age, income, level of education, or ability to get dental care. Everyone benefits when they drink fluoridated water and consume foods and beverages prepared with it.

Is Community Water Fluoridation Safe?

Absolutely! The safety of community water fluoridation has been studied more thoroughly than any other public health measure during the past 60 years. Hundreds of clinical, animal, and laboratory studies support its safety.

Who Supports Community Water Fluoridation?

Community water fluoridation has the unqualified approval of every major health organization in the United States and many other countries. The American Dental Association, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the American Medical Association, and the World Health Organization strongly endorse water fluoridation. Many organizations support fluoridation, including the American Association of Public Health Dentistry, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Cancer Society, American Dental Hygienists' Association, American Heart Association, American Public Health Association, and International Association for Dental Research.

Community water fluoridation is the most efficient way to prevent tooth decay. The following key facts about fluoridation summarize why this is so.

- Fluoridation of community water supplies is the single most effective public health measure to prevent dental decay.
- Throughout more than 65 years of research and practical experience, the best available 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 125 national and international health, service and professional organizations that 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 at least 25% in children and adults, even in the era of 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 recommended levels to protect oral health.
- 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 \$3.00 a year per person in small communities to approximately \$0.50 a year per person in large communities.
- For most cities, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation yields \$38 savings in dental treatment costs. An individual can have a lifetime of fluoridated water for less than the cost of a silver filling.
- The latest data show that in 2010, 73.9% of the U.S. population on public water systems, or a total of 204.3 million people, had access to optimally fluoridated water.
- In the past twelve years (2000 through 2011), more than 362 U.S. communities in 41 states have voted to adopt or retain successful fluoridation programs.
- 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 www.ada.org/fluoride.

Is the Drinking Water in your Community Fluoridated?

There are several ways to learn if your community maintains optimum levels of fluoride in its drinking water. A telephone call or letter to the utility that provides water for your community is probably the easiest way. You can also ask physicians, dentists, and pharmacists in your community, or check with your local, county or state health departments.

The American Association of Public Health Dentistry urges you to support the adoption or continuation of community water fluoridation for your community. Find out if your community is fluoridated. If it isn't, ask your political leaders and local health officials why not. You have a right to the improved dental health that comes from living in a fluoridated community!