

What Respected Organizations and Experts Say About Water Fluoridation

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life is better
WITH TEETH

CAMPAIGN IN DEFENSE OF ORAL HEALTH

Academy of General Dentistry

“Fluoride makes the entire tooth structure more resistant to decay and promotes remineralization, which aids in repairing early decay before damage is even visible. Studies have confirmed the most effective source of fluoride to be water fluoridation.”¹

“Instead of drilling holes to fix cavities, dentists would rather educate the public on how to avoid developing tooth decay in the first place. Drinking tap water to receive fluoride is safe, and it’s easier on your wallet than going to the dentist for a filling.”²

American Academy of Pediatrics:

“Fluoride plays a very important role in the prevention of dental caries. Although the primary mechanism of action of fluoride in preventing dental caries is topical, systemic mechanisms are also important.”³

“Water fluoridation is a cost-effective means of preventing dental caries, with the lifetime cost per person equaling less than the cost of 1 dental restoration. In short, fluoridated water is the cheapest and most effective way to deliver anticaries benefits to communities.”⁴

American Academy of Pediatrics (New York State Chapter):

“Community water fluoridation is safe, effective and necessary to prevent chronic dental disease in pediatric populations.”

“Dental decay is a common but preventable, chronic disease. It is our youngest children who are at the greatest risk for developing early dental disease while not having access to a dental care home. ... Without community water fluoridation the incidence of this disease and its attendant complications will increase.”⁵

American Academy of Family Physicians:

“Fluoridation of public water supplies is a safe, economical, and effective measure to prevent dental caries.”⁶

American Academy of Physician Assistants:

“Primary prevention keeps disease from occurring at all by removing its causes. Examples of primary prevention include . . . giving immunizations for many communicable diseases, and counseling patients to adopt healthy lifestyles ... Examples include chlorination and fluoridation of the water supply ...”⁷

“Fluoride substantially decreases caries rates. ... All children should receive fluoride through systemic water fluoridation or dietary supplements.”⁸

American Association for the Advancement of Science:

“... fluoridation of community water supplies is repeatedly demonstrating that it is an effective public health measure for the mass partial control of dental cavities, and ... [AAAS is] on record as endorsing fluoridation of community water supplies as a method for advancing dental public health, as this 121st meeting of the AAAS.”⁹

American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons:

“Community water fluoridation, which adjusts the fluoride in water to a level sufficient for preventing and controlling tooth decay, reduces tooth decay by 30–50%.”

“Although great progress has been made, nearly 28% of public water systems do not have the capacity to deliver—and approximately 100 million Americans do not have access to—optimally fluoridated water. Many communities need support to upgrade or purchase new water systems and fluoridation equipment.”¹⁰

American Association of Public Health Dentistry:

“... it has been shown that children with the greatest dental need and who are at highest risk for tooth decay benefit the most from water fluoridation.”

The resolution also stated: “The Association recommends that federal, state, and local agencies and organizations promote water fluoridation as the foundation for better oral health.”¹¹

American Council on Science and Health:

“Fluoride is harmless at the levels necessary for maximum (dental) benefits. Thousands of studies on fluorides and fluoridation have been completed in the last 50 years — more than 3,700 since 1970 alone. Over 50 peer-reviewed epidemiological studies have dealt with the claim that fluoridation increases cancer risk. None has substantiated the claim.”¹²

American Dental Association:

“Studies conducted throughout the past 65 years have consistently shown that fluoridation of community water supplies is safe and effective in preventing dental decay in both children and adults. Simply by drinking water, children and adults can benefit from fluoridation’s cavity protection whether they are at home, work or school.”¹³

American Dental Education Association:

“ADEA supports and encourages fluoridation of community water supplies and the use of topical fluoride. Community water fluoridation is safe, practical, and the most cost-effective measure for the prevention of dental caries.”¹⁴

American Dental Hygienists’ Association:

“Good scientific evidence supports the use of community water fluoridation and the use of fluoride dental products for preventing tooth decay for both children and adults.

“Adjusting the level of fluoride in drinking water first used fluoride as a preventative for tooth decay in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Fluoridation of drinking water has been used successfully in the United States for more than 50 years.”¹⁵

American Dietetic Association:

“The American Dietetic Association reaffirms that fluoride is an important element for all mineralized tissues in the body. Appropriate fluoride exposure and usage is beneficial to bone and tooth integrity and, as such, has an important, positive impact on health throughout life.”¹⁶

American Federation of Teachers:

"The good news is that tooth decay and other oral diseases are preventable. The combination of dental sealants and fluoride has the potential to nearly eliminate tooth decay in school-age children."¹⁷

American Medical Association:

"The AMA urges state health departments to consider the value of required statewide fluoridation (preferably a comprehensive program of fluoridation of all public water supplies, where these are fluoride deficient), and to initiate such action as deemed appropriate."¹⁸

AMA has also encouraged physicians to "become involved" in the fluoridation issue by determining "whether municipal water supplies are optimally fluoridated and ... working with public health agencies to take corrective action if suboptimal fluoridation is found."¹⁹

American Osteopathic Association:

"The American Osteopathic Association supports the fluoridation of fluoride-deficient public water supply."²⁰

American Public Health Association:

"[The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services] announced proposed recommendations to simplify the recommended optimal level for community water systems to 0.7 mg/L fluoride ... APHA continues to support community water fluoridation as a sound public health preventive measure. APHA is supportive of the process of updating recommendations for optimal fluoride concentrations in water based on today's conditions."²¹

American Society for Clinical Nutrition:

"... the American Society for Clinical Nutrition agrees that fluoridation of community water supplies to an optimum level wherever the natural level is less than optimum is a safe, economical, and effective measure to improve dental health by improving nutrition."²²

American Water Works Association:

"... community water fluoridation at optimal levels is beneficial for preventing tooth decay.

"The goal of community water fluoridation is to achieve the desired oral health benefit while minimizing potential health risks. That is why water providers undergo thorough and extensive training to safely apply fluoride in the amount recommended by the world's most respected public health authorities."²³

Association of California Water Agencies:

"ACWA is a diverse state wide organization representing nearly 450 public water agencies that collectively supply 90% of the water delivered in California for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses. California enjoys some of the highest water quality in the world.

"... ACWA reaffirms its support for water fluoridation and strongly believes that its benefits need to be continued to communities served by centralized water systems."²⁴

Association of State & Territorial Dental Directors:

“Community water fluoridation remains the cornerstone of dental caries prevention in the United States and has been demonstrated to be safe, cost-effective and beneficial through every stage of life and for all people, regardless of age, race, ethnicity or socio-economic status.”²⁵

Audrey F. Manley, M.D., M.P.H., Surgeon General under President Bill Clinton:

“Water fluoridation continues to be the cornerstone of community oral disease prevention. The benefits of fluoridation are available, on average, for little more than \$0.50 per person per year, and even less, in large communities.”²⁶

Australian Dental Association:

“Drinking fluoridated water several times a day is the ideal way to give your teeth a quick fluoride treatment.”

“... Fluoride from fluoridated water is found in saliva and provides a wonderful, low concentration fluoride treatment for your teeth.”²⁷

The Bower Foundation:

“The most inexpensive way to deliver the benefits of fluoride to all residents of a community is through water fluoridation. For most cities, every dollar invested in public water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs.”²⁸

British Dental Association:

“The BDA is pleased with [a program to expand fluoridation in southwest England] because it is likely to encourage consultation on similar schemes in other parts of the country where fluoride could help address the poor dental health of the population.”

“A recent European summary of the latest scientific evidence reiterated the view that water fluoridation is a safe and effective method of reducing oral health inequalities.”²⁹

British Dental Health Foundation:

“Fluoride was added to the Birmingham supply in 1964 and the difference in dental health compared to the neighbouring population in non-fluoridated Sandwell was stark. When Sandwell’s water was fluoridated in 1987 it transformed levels of oral health, putting a poor borough amongst the top ten areas for dental health in the country.”³⁰

British Medical Association:

“The BMA remains committed to the fluoridation of mains water supplies, after appropriate public consultation, on the grounds of effectiveness, safety and equity.”³¹

Canadian Dental Association:

“Fluoride is added to public drinking water to protect all members of the community from tooth decay. Community water fluoridation is a safe and effective way of preventing tooth decay at a low cost.”³²

Canadian Public Health Association

"In 1945, Brantford, Ontario became the first Canadian community to test water fluoridation, thereby achieving a 54% reduction in decay experienced by 8-year-olds."

"In Quebec, for instance, less than 7% of the population has access to fluoridated water. A study of the oral health of children between 1990 and 1999 found that kindergarten children in Quebec had 40% more cavities than children in Ontario and the United States, and that tooth decay affects 56% of Quebec children in Grade 2."³³

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

The CDC named the "fluoridation of drinking water" as one of "10 great public health achievements" of the 20th century.³⁴

C. Everett Koop, M.D., Surgeon General under President Ronald Reagan:

"... I encourage the dental profession in communities which do not enjoy the benefits of an optimally fluoridated drinking water supply to exercise effective leadership in bringing the concentration to within an optimum level."³⁵

Children's Dental Health Project:

"Water fluoridation is particularly beneficial during childhood and in adolescence when cavity experience first begins. Not only do children who drink fluoridated water have fewer cavities but their cavities are smaller and less deep when they do occur."³⁶

Children's Hospital of Denver, Colorado:

In 2008, this hospital was ranked in the top 10 children's hospitals in the U.S.³⁷

"From a public health perspective, to improve the oral health of the people of Colorado the first important step is to fluoridate those public water systems that are as yet non-fluoridated."

Council of State Governments:

"... states need to reduce expenditures in Medicaid budgets and studies have proven that communities benefiting from fluoridated water use fewer Medicaid dollars to treat dental decay.

"... simply by drinking water, everyone, especially those without access to regular dental care, can benefit from fluoridation's cavity protection whether they are at home, work or school."³⁸

David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D., Surgeon General under President Bill Clinton:

"Other evidence of the benefits of fluoridation comes from studies of populations where fluoridation has ceased. Examples in the United States, Germany, and Scotland have shown that when fluoridation is withdrawn and there are few other fluoride exposures, the prevalence of caries increases. In Wick, Scotland, which began water fluoridation in 1969 but stopped it in 1979, the caries prevalence in 5- to 6-year-olds with limited exposure to other sources of fluoride increased by 27 percent between 1979 and 1984. This was despite a national decline in caries ..."³⁹

Early Head Start National Resource Center:

"Fluoride is the most effective agent to prevent tooth decay. It can be added to community water supplies, as needed, and occurs naturally in some areas."

"... Early Head Start staff and parents should be aware that purchased bottled water usually does not contain enough fluoride to prevent tooth decay."⁴⁰

Ernie Mueller, Alaska's former Commissioner of Environmental Conservation:

"I followed [the fluoridation issue] through my 35-year career in water and wastewater research, supervision and management. ... What is disturbing is that the inflammatory and misleading rhetoric used by some of the opponents of fluoridation frightens many people who may not have personal knowledge of the issue."⁴¹

Florida Public Health Institute:

"Fluoride reduces the ability of bacteria to produce acid and promotes the remineralization of enamel, thereby preventing a cavity from continuing to form. Community water fluoridation is a proven cost-effective intervention that optimizes fluoride content in public water systems to promote oral health. Florida's Department of Health supports Community Water Fluoridation."⁴²

GreenFacts.org

(an international organization with a board of scientific advisers):

"The numerous studies carried out in many countries on populations consuming fluoridated drinking water did not show any consistent evidence of an association between the consumption of controlled fluoridated drinking water and increased frequency of cancer."⁴³

Idaho Medical Association:

"The IMA has historically taken a leadership role in public health and safety issues. Its proactive support for polio immunization, public water fluoridation, civil defense planning, cigarette warning labels, use of seat belts, child abuse reporting, motorcycle helmet use, day care licensing, cigarette taxes, minimum drinking age, and immunization of schoolchildren has positively impacted the quality of life and health of all Idahoans."⁴⁴

Indiana State Department of Health:

"Despite the fact that thousands of studies, analyses, and experiments have shown fluoridation to be safe and effective, some insist that it cease until all doubts about its safety have been resolved. Of course, it is impossible to prove the absolute safety of anything. But in the case of fluoridation, opponents are constantly making new allegations, none of which are supported by science."⁴⁵

Indian Health Service (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services):

"An effective community water fluoridation program should be the cornerstone of all public oral health programs."⁴⁶

"Recent studies have found a smaller difference in the caries prevalence between optimally fluoridated and fluoride-deficient communities. In American Indian/Alaska Native populations the expected reductions in disease may be even greater, given the high caries rates."⁴⁷

International Agency for Research on Cancer:

"Fluoridation of drinking-water was introduced in the USA in 1950, and thus the studies in the USA encompass periods of observation of 20 years or more. . . . The studies have shown no consistent tendency for people living in areas with high concentrations of fluoride in the water to have higher cancer rates than those living in areas with low concentrations or for cancer mortality rates to increase following fluoridation."

"Since a large number of comparisons were made, some would be expected by chance alone to show differences. However, no consistent difference has been seen, and there have been as many significant negative associations between fluoridated water supplies and cancer incidence or mortality as there have been positive associations."

". . . Epidemiological studies have shown no association between the presence of fluorides in drinking-water and the incidence of Down's syndrome."⁴⁸

International Association of Dental Research:

"The International Association for Dental Research (IADR), considering that dental caries (tooth decay) ranks among the most prevalent chronic diseases worldwide . . . and taking into account that over 50 years of research have clearly demonstrated its efficacy and safety; and noting that numerous national and international health-related organizations endorse fluoridation of water supplies; fully endorses and strongly recommends the practice of water fluoridation for improving the oral health of nations."⁴⁹

Irish Forum on Fluoridation:

Note: The Forum on Fluoridation was appointed by Ireland's government to study the impact of water fluoridation on the Irish people. The Forum published its report in September 2002. The very first conclusion of this report is below:

"Water fluoridation has been very effective in improving the oral health of the Irish population, especially of children, but also of adults and the elderly."⁵⁰

Joseph Thompson, M.D., Surgeon General of the State of Arkansas:

"Water fluoridation was trumpeted by the CDC as one of the most important health measures of the 20th century. Now that we are in the 21st century, every community and water system not currently providing this benefit to their residents and customers needs to step up and help their community and its residents."⁵¹

Linus Pauling, winner of the Nobel Prize (1954) and National Medal of Science (1974):

Note: Opponents of water fluoridation often label fluoride as "toxic" or "poison." Linus Pauling debunked this assertion in a 1967 article by writing:

"In this respect, fluoride ion is similar to many other substances, such as vitamin D, that are harmful in large amounts but are required in small amounts for life and good health of human beings."⁵²

Roughly 20 years before he died, Pauling co-founded the Linus Pauling Institute. The Institute has issued this statement on fluoride:

"Although its role in the prevention of dental caries (tooth decay) is well established, fluoride is not generally considered an essential mineral element because humans do not require it for growth or to sustain life. However, if one considers the prevention of chronic disease (dental caries) an important criterion in determining essentiality, then fluoride might well be considered an essential trace element."⁵³

Massachusetts Dental Society:

"...we also have come to realize that the issue of fluoride, to some, is less about science and more about emotion. The groups and individuals questioning the safety of fluoride tend to forget that many dentists are parents, too. Why would we advocate for water fluoridation if we believed that it would be compromising our own children's health in any way?"⁵⁴

Michigan Department of Community Health:

"Community water fluoridation has proven to be safe through both practical experience and research. During the past 40 years, over 4,000 studies have measured and confirmed the safety of fluoride. Community water fluoridation has been studied more thoroughly than any other public health measure."⁵⁵

Michigan State Medical Society:

"The Michigan State Medical Society, in cooperation with the Michigan Association of Public Health and Preventive Medicine Physicians, is urging citizens and public water facilities throughout the state not to misinterpret the new [federal] recommendations regarding the fluoridation of municipal water."

"... the FDA believes that reducing the level of fluoride in municipal water will help reduce the occurrence of dental fluorosis, a harmless discoloration (mottling) that can occur with higher levels of exposure to fluoride. Fluoridation of water can decrease cavities by up to 40% if available to children during the first 7 years of their lives. The value of fluoridation has been thoroughly established as safe and effective."⁵⁶

Mississippi State Department of Health:

"Water fluoridation is an effective, safe and inexpensive way to prevent tooth decay. ... In Mississippi, the cost of water fluoridation is usually between one and two dollars per person per year and saves \$16-\$19 per person per year in dental treatment costs."⁵⁷

National Consumers League:

"Bottled water consumption has doubled over the past decade and as a result, the exposure to fluoride from tap water, which can not only prevent tooth decay, it can repair tooth decay, has been reduced as well."

"Oral health is a critical component of overall health, and we need to spread the word about the importance of brushing with fluoridated toothpaste twice a day, drinking tap water wherever possible, and seeing the dentist twice a year. The benefits will pay off exponentially."⁵⁸

National Council Against Health Fraud:

"Antifluoridationists who point out that fluoride can produce adverse effects deliberately fail to mention that the concentrations that produce adverse effects [are] higher than the concentration produced by properly maintained fluoridation systems."

"... NCAHF believes that the factions that keep alive the antifluoridation movement are a major detriment to the health and well-being of the public."⁵⁹

National Dental Association:

“As a result of water fluoridation half of all children ages 5 to 17 have never had a cavity in their permanent teeth. Despite the overwhelming evidence of the value of water fluoridation 34% of the population still does not have access to fluoridated water. Water fluoridation would save over \$1.5 billion per year.”⁶⁰

National Fluoride Information Centre (United Kingdom):

Note: Many anti-fluoridation activists tell the public that “Europe doesn’t fluoridate.” Although it is true that water fluoridation is not common in Europe, this argument is very misleading because there are other ways, such as fluoridating salt and milk, that many European countries provide fluoride to their citizens:

“Salt fluoridation was introduced in Switzerland in 1955 and it is now estimated that fluoridated salt is available to nearly 200 million people worldwide, including Europe, Central and South America and the Caribbean. It is the preferred method of fluoridation on mainland Europe and is widely available in France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Czech Republic and Slovakia.”⁶¹

In addition, millions of Irish and English drink fluoridated water:

“Five and a half million people in England drink artificially fluoridated water. In these areas the children have among the lowest levels of tooth decay in the country. Recent independent research at the University of York has confirmed the benefits of fluoridation. Fluoridation works best in large towns with a simple water supply and where the children have high amounts of dental decay. People living in Birmingham and Newcastle have been drinking fluoridated water for more than 30 years.”⁶²

National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research:

“Although dental caries remains a public health worry, it is no longer the unbridled problem it once was, thanks to fluoride.”⁶³

National PTA (Parent-Teacher Association):

“PTA involvement laid the groundwork for cooperative partnerships with medical associations and health organizations in the decades to come. ... [PTA also worked] to educate members about other immunizations and treating water with fluoride to prevent rampant dental problems.”⁶⁴

Nevada State Medical Association:

“... the NSMA and its component medical societies support legislative efforts to promote community water fluoridation at optimal levels to decrease the incidence of dental caries.”⁶⁵

Oklahoma State Department of Health:

“It is recommended that all public water systems in Oklahoma be fluoridated to provide this cost-effective oral disease prevention measure to residents throughout Oklahoma.”⁶⁶

Oral Health America:

“Oral Health America enthusiastically supports community water fluoridation. Fluoridated water supplies give Americans, especially those most vulnerable, equal access to one of the most celebrated public health measures of our time. Fluoridation brings healthy mouths to life.”⁶⁷

Oregon Medical Association:

“OMA recognizes the health benefits of fluoridation and has long stood in support of fluoridating public water supplies.”

“OMA reaffirms its support for fluoridation of all public water supply systems ...”⁶⁸

Pew Center on the States:

“Fluoride counteracts tooth decay and strengthens the teeth by fighting harmful acids and drawing calcium back into the teeth. Community water fluoridation can reduce tooth decay in children by up to 60 percent, and it costs as little as \$1 per person, per year.

“Research shows that community water fluoridation offers perhaps the greatest return-on-investment of any dental care strategy. The reduction in just the costs of filling and extracting diseased teeth (not counting reductions in lost work time and dental pain) more than makes up for the cost of fluoridation.”

Public Health Law Research (Temple University):

“Fluoride is a mineral that has been proven effective at preventing tooth decay.”

“... In the judgment of a Community Guide expert panel, there is significant evidence to support water fluoridation as an effective public health intervention aimed at reducing tooth decay.”⁶⁹

Richard H. Carmona, M.D., Surgeon General under President George W. Bush:

“Water fluoridation is a powerful strategy in our efforts to eliminate differences in health among people and is consistent with my emphasis on the importance of prevention.

“... Fluoridation is the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health over a lifetime, for both children and adults.”⁷⁰

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital:

“Fluoride, either applied topically to erupted teeth, or ingested orally (called systemic fluoride) during tooth development, helps to prevent tooth decay, strengthen tooth enamel, and reduce the harmful effects of plaque.”⁷¹

Tennessee Department of Health:

“Fluoride is naturally occurring and present in all bodies of water (rivers, lakes, springs, and wells) to some degree. Water fluoridation is the adjustment of the natural level of fluoride to a level that is optimal for oral health.

“... More than 60 years of research supports the fact that community water fluoridation is both safe and effective.”⁷²

Texas Department of State Health Services:

"The wide implementation of community water fluoridation in Texas has resulted in substantial savings in publicly financed dental care under the Texas Healthy Steps (EPSDT-Medicaid) program. Further savings may be made by implementing community water fluoridation in areas where it is lacking and feasible."⁷³

United Methodist Health Ministry Fund:

"Since 1998, the Health Fund has offered grants to fund the start-up costs of community water fluoridation due to fluoridation's time-proven oral health benefits, safety, and practicality. Persons living in communities with fluoridated water enjoy 20 to 40% less tooth decay than those in areas without adequate fluoride."⁷⁴

U.S. Task Force on Community Preventive Services:

"The Task Force on Community Preventive Services recommends community water fluoridation based on strong evidence of effectiveness in reducing tooth decay."⁷⁵

Utah Health Department:

"The nationwide goal to prevent cavities through community water fluoridation is similar to previous public health efforts to prevent other common health problems. These include adding iodide to salt to prevent thyroid problems, adding iron to infant formula to prevent anemia, adding Vitamin D to milk to prevent rickets, adding niacin to flour and other foods to prevent pellagra, and adding folic acid to cereal grains products to prevent birth defects.

"Each of these public health efforts represents situations where a nutritional additive is provided to everyone or to large target populations since it is impossible to individually identify and effectively treat the significant number of people who are at risk."⁷⁶

Vermont Medical Society:

"... frequent exposure to small amounts of fluoride enhances developing enamel and encourages remineralization, replacing minerals that bacteria dissolve from the enamel surface of teeth."

"... the Vermont Medical Society endorses fluoridation as an important community commitment to the oral health of its children and adults and it affirms the value of continuing fluoridation in community water systems."⁷⁷

Washington State Public Health Association:

"... the benefits of fluoridation of water in the prevention of dental disease have been scientifically substantiated."

"... the Washington State Public Health Association actively endorses and strongly supports fluoridation of the public water systems in the State of Washington."⁷⁸

WebMD.com:

"Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay by making the tooth more resistant to acid attacks from plaque bacteria and sugars in the mouth. It also reverses early decay. In children under six years of age, fluoride becomes incorporated into the development of permanent teeth, making it difficult for acids to demineralize the teeth. Fluoride also helps speed remineralization as well as disrupts acid production in already erupted teeth of both children and adults."⁷⁹

Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition:

"... community water fluoridation is a significant cost containment measure available for dental caries prevention in communities throughout Wisconsin, costing an average of approximately 50 cents per person per year while reducing the need for expensive treatment ..."⁸⁰

World Health Organization:

"Fluoride is being widely used on a global scale, with much benefit. Millions of people worldwide use fluoridated toothpaste. They benefit from fluoridated water, salt fluoridation or other forms of fluoride applications ..."⁸¹

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