



Fluoride FAQs

Misinformation about community water fluoridation is common. Get science-based answers to your questions here.



What Is Fluoride?

Fluoride, nature's cavity fighter, occurs naturally in water sources like rivers, lakes, and oceans.



What Are the Benefits of Fluoride?

Evidence shows that water fluoridation prevents tooth decay by providing frequent and consistent contact with low levels of fluoride, **ultimately reducing tooth decay by at least 25% in children and adults.** Community water fluoridation benefits everyone, regardless of income, age, or ability to access dental care.



What Are the Risks of Optimally Fluoridated Water?

There is **NO** valid, peer-reviewed scientific evidence of any adverse health effects of optimally fluoridated water. Leading health organizations continue to support its safety and benefits.



Is Fluoride Safe?

Public water systems have been fluoridated for nearly 80 years. **Extensive scientific research has consistently demonstrated that fluoridation is both safe and effective.** Optimally fluoridated water is endorsed not only by the American Dental Association (ADA), but also over 100 other health organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Medical Association (AMA), World Health Organization (WHO), and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The CDC named community water fluoridation one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.



Why Is Fluoride Added to Water?

Most water naturally contains fluoride, but usually at levels too low to prevent cavities. To support oral health, many communities adjust fluoride levels in the water supply to the optimal concentration of 0.7 parts per million (ppm)—**equivalent to about three drops in 55 gallons.** This process, known as water fluoridation, is similar to fortifying foods like iodized salt, vitamin D-enriched milk, calcium-fortified orange juice, and folic acid-enriched bread.



Does Fluoride Harm IQ?

The best available science-based evidence does not establish a causal relationship between consumption of water fluoridated at recommended levels and lowered intelligence (IQ) or behavioral disorders in children.



How Does Fluoride Work?

Fluoridated drinking water and toothpaste work together for better protection than either alone. Systemically, optimally fluoridated water strengthens developing permanent teeth before they emerge from the gums. Topically, fluoride from water, toothpaste, and rinses helps remineralize tooth enamel in *both* children and adults.



How Much Does Community Water Fluoridation Cost?

Water fluoridation is a cost-effective measure. **The average lifetime cost per person to fluoridate a water supply is less than the cost of a single dental filling.** For community water systems that serve more than 1,000 people, the economic benefit of fluoridation exceeds the cost.

For additional resources on fluoride, including access to studies, research, and answers to frequently asked questions, visit us at tndental.org or simply scan the QR code.

