

Water Fluoridation

Overview

For six decades, the American Dental Association has continuously endorsed the fluoridation of community water supplies and the use of fluoride-containing products as safe and effective measures for preventing tooth decay.

The ADA has endorsed fluoridation of community water supplies as safe and effective for preventing tooth decay for more than 40 years. Water fluoridation—the process of adjusting the natural level of fluoride to a concentration sufficient to protect against tooth decay (from 0.7 parts per million to 1.2 ppm)—has been recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as one of the ten great public health achievements of the 20th Century. Fluoride's benefits are particularly important for those Americans, especially children, who lack adequate access to dental care. It is safe and effective and has been described as "the best bang for the nation's public health buck".

However, some people have lobbied at federal, state and community levels to end or prevent community water fluoridation. They have raised public concern about the safety of fluoride and, despite evidence to the contrary, have targeted the ADA and the ODA for our support of fluoridation.

Furthermore, efforts to introduce fluoridation into community water supplies are frequently undermined by limited funds for infrastructure, perceived controversy, voter apathy, confusing ballot language, and an abundance of misinformation that has flourished on the Internet. As a result, optimally fluoridated water is available to only two-thirds of those served by public water systems.

Based on scientific evidence, the ADA supports universal fluoridation and believes that all communal water supplies containing less than the optimal level of fluoride should be adjusted to that level.

What exactly does fluoridation do to help our teeth?

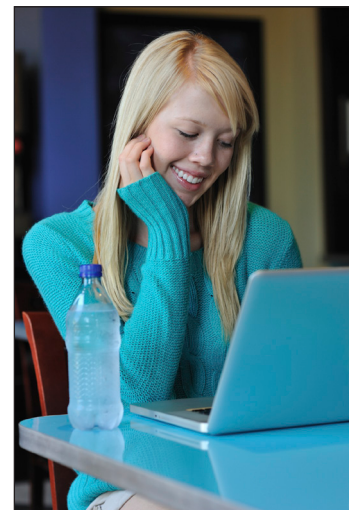
Fluoridated water operates on tooth surfaces: in the mouth it creates low levels of fluoride in saliva, which reduces the rate at which tooth enamel demineralizes and increases the rate at which it remineralizes in the early stages of decay.

Can the consistent use of bottled water result in individuals missing the benefits of optimally fluoridated water?

Yes. The majority of bottled waters on the market do not contain optimal levels (0.7-1.2 ppm) of fluoride.

Can home water treatment systems (e.g., water filters) affect optimally fluoridated water supplies?

Yes. Some types of home water treatment systems can reduce the fluoride levels in water supplies, potentially decreasing the decay-preventive effects of optimally fluoridated water.



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