



## **Bottled Water and Your Teeth**

The widespread use of fluorides in various forms (water, milk, salt, dentifrices, gels, rinses, tablets, drops, etc.) is in large part responsible for the significant declines in tooth decay.

Drinking fluoridated water is more effective than using toothpastes or mouth rinses that contain fluoride. Fluoride from toothpaste is only on the teeth for a short time, whereas consumption of fluoridated water allows fluoride to continually be delivered to the teeth through the bloodstream and saliva. And it is a fact that fluoride helps to prevent tooth decay and is especially important for children as their baby and permanent teeth come in.

A recent study shows that Americans consume more than six billion gallons of bottled water a year, more than double the amount from a decade ago. The ADA, FDA and CDC all agree that bottled water is not necessarily better than tap water. If bottled water is your main source of drinking water, you could be missing the decay-preventive benefits of fluoride, the naturally occurring mineral that helps prevent tooth decay which is found in most municipal water supplies.

When water is treated before it is bottled, fluoride may be lost. For example, many popular brands of bottled water undergo reverse osmosis or distillation. These treatments remove all of the fluoride from the water. For many children, bottled water is the main source of water consumption. This includes the use of bottle water for the preparation of formula, juices, etc. And don't overlook your home water treatment system. Many are reverse osmosis and distillation units, which may remove the fluoride from your water supply. Check your water treatment system's operations manual or contact the manufacturer if you're unable to determine the unit's effect on fluoride levels.

How can you make sure you and your family – especially children – are getting the right amount of fluoride protection in bottle water? Most delivered domestic water and water

obtained from stores contain insignificant amounts of fluoride. However, some brands do contain levels of fluoride and consumers are encouraged to check the labeling of bottled water. Amounts of fluoride are the same whether they are reported in parts per million or milligrams per liter. To help prevent tooth decay, water should contain 0.7 to 1.2 ppm of fluoride. One ppm is equal to 1 mg/L. If the bottle company does not report the fluoride content, contact the company and ask what level of fluoride the water contains, or choose a bottled water that does report the fluoride level. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's current regulations do not require bottled water companies to indicate fluoride content on bottle water labels, unless it has been added to the water, and some bottled water companies are now offering "fluoride added" options.

**Do you use bottled water for cooking and other food preparation? You may need to provide fluoride supplements to your children if you use bottled water for cooking. Ask your dentist about this.**

**Talk to your dentist about bottle water and how it relates to your family's oral health.**