

# Community Water Fluoridation Factsheet



## Overview

Tooth decay affects all age groups. Although it is nearly 100% preventable, it is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Untreated decay can lead to pain, tooth loss, poor nutrition, and difficulty eating, sleeping, and learning. Nearly one-fifth of all health care spending for children is related to dental care.

Oral health is important throughout a person's life. In the 1950s, before water fluoridation was common, most people over the age of 65 had lost their teeth. Now, after decades of widespread fluoridation and the importance of dental care, more seniors are keeping most or all of their teeth.

Between 1972 and 2001, the rate of losing all of one's teeth dropped 26 percent among lower-income seniors and fell 70 percent among upper-income seniors. Fluoridating water reduces cavity rates in children and adults by as much as 40% and often costs less than \$1 per person per year.<sup>1</sup>

Drinking water that is optimally fluoridated benefits people of all ages. For 65 years, community water fluoridation has been a safe and healthy way to effectively prevent tooth decay. A person's income level or ability to receive routine dental care is not a barrier to receiving the health benefits of fluoridation. All residents and visitors can benefit from community water fluoridation simply by consuming foods and beverages prepared with fluoridated water.

### Fluoride Facts:

*The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recognized water fluoridation as one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.*

*Brushing regularly with fluoride toothpaste helps, but it is not enough to fully protect teeth.*

*For most cities, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs.*

<sup>1</sup> Brunelle, JA, Carlos, JP. Recent trends in dental caries in US children and the effect of water fluoridation. J Dent Res. 1990;69 (Spec Iss). 723-7.

## Resources

It is important to know the facts about fluoride and its benefits. The following resources provide some additional information on fluoridation, the benefits of fluoridation and provide data and information on fluoridation.

The [Campaign for Dental Health](#) was created to ensure every American has access to the cheapest, most effective way to protect teeth — water fluoridation. ([www.ilikemyteeth.org](http://www.ilikemyteeth.org)).

A [recent change in the recommended fluoridation](#) levels by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has caused confusion among communities about optimal fluoridation levels. The new recommendation, 0.7 milligrams of fluoride per liter of water, replaces the previous recommended range of 0.7 to 1.2 milligrams per liter. There are several reasons for this change, including that Americans have access to more sources of fluoride than they did when water fluoridation was first introduced in the United States.

([http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/fact\\_sheets/cwf\\_qa.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/fact_sheets/cwf_qa.htm))

For 65 years, community water fluoridation has been a safe and healthy way to effectively prevent tooth decay. [CDC](#) has recognized water fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. ([www.cdc.gov/fluoridation](http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation))

The [American Dental Association](#) continues to endorse fluoridation of community water supplies as safe and effective for preventing tooth decay. This support has been the Association's position since policy was first adopted in 1950.

(<http://www.ada.org/fluoride.aspx>).

## Delta Dental of Iowa Fluoridation Activities

The [Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation](#) collaborates with IDPH to offer Community Fluoridation Awards. These awards assist Iowa communities with fluoridation of public water supplies where fluoride is deficient or non-existent or where expenses for upgrades in equipment threatens the ability of the community to continue to fluoridate the water.

For more information on the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation and the Community Fluoridation Awards visit:

<http://www.deltadentalia.com/publicbenefitprogram/fluoride>

## Did you know...

*Overall, approximately 83 percent of Iowa's total population is receiving optimally fluoridated water.*

*The Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation recognizes community water fluoridation as a key contributor to meeting its goal of dramatically improving the oral health of low-income children.*

*The Foundation has budgeted \$60,000 in 2012 to provide 10 grants of up to \$6,000 each to Iowa communities demonstrating the greatest need for fluoridation.*

## For more information:

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