



Blog Posts about Fluoridation

Note: The following 13 articles are for use on your organization's or personal blogs — or for use in your organization's newsletters or e-updates. Feel free to revise any of these articles as you feel is appropriate for your needs. Please read each blog post carefully to make sure it is appropriate for your organization's needs.

Fluoridation Works Two Ways

How does fluoridated water actually work to protect teeth from tooth decay? It's a question that some people may ask, so here's the answer.

As [this video](#) explains, fluoridated water works two ways. First, for young children during the tooth-forming years, the fluoride that is swallowed helps to strengthen the enamel of the developing teeth, making it more resistant to decay. Second, for people of all ages, trace levels of fluoride (from tap water or beverages made with it) get mixed with the saliva that exists in the mouth and covers the teeth. Saliva neutralizes the acid made by bacteria causing the decay process, and as the acid is neutralized, the fluoride is absorbed by the tooth enamel to make it stronger.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fluoridated water [works](#) “mainly by providing teeth with frequent contact with low levels of fluoride throughout each day and throughout life.” A 2013 study published by the *British Dental Journal* [reached](#) this conclusion: “Fluoridation of the drinking water is still the optimal method of fluoride delivery.”

So spread the word to your friends, family and neighbors. Drinking fluoridated water remains a smart way to avoid tooth decay.

Happy Birthday to Fluoridation

Some things don't age gracefully, but community water fluoridation is looking great at the age of 70. This inexpensive strategy [saves money](#) and continues to reduce the rate of tooth decay for children and adults. Yes, there was a lot of research conducted about fluoridation in the 1940s and '50s, but many more studies have been released in [recent years](#). Together, they build a rock-solid case for fluoridation's safety and benefits.

Many people wondered if fluoridation would prove valuable even after Americans began using fluoride toothpaste, but the evidence shows this strategy remains crucial. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [explains](#), “Even today, with other available sources of fluoride, studies show that water fluoridation reduces tooth decay by about 25 percent over a person's lifetime.”

Sure, there are a handful of people who attack fluoridation. It's nothing new. In the 1950s, University of Michigan researchers took the time to [examine](#) a long list of health conditions (ranging from acne to cancer) that critics tried to blame on fluoride. The researchers found no solid evidence to back any of these accusations.

In recent years, studies have looked into similar claims by fluoridation opponents. Last August, the Royal Society of New Zealand, one of the nation's most prestigious scientific bodies, issued [a report](#) stating that its panel was “unanimous in its conclusion that there are no adverse effects of fluoride of any significance arising from fluoridation at the levels used in New Zealand.”

The facts are on our side. It's effective. It's safe. And it's the reason why both children and adults today have much less tooth decay than people used to have.

Fluoridation: Reaching Around the Globe

Is community water fluoridation an approach that only a few countries take for reducing tooth decay? You might think so if you only listened to critics of fluoridation. For example, [this opponent](#) claims that only three countries have fluoridation programs — the United States, Great Britain and Australia. That's simply false.

In fact, more than a dozen [other nations](#) use community water fluoridation to reduce the risk of cavities. These countries include Canada, Argentina, South Korea, Spain, Chile, Ireland and Singapore. Fluoridation is a prevention strategy that is widely used in [Brazil](#), which has the 5th largest population of any nation.

Yes, water fluoridation began here in America and [many nations](#) have followed our lead over the last 70 years. In other countries — such as Germany, Mexico and Switzerland — fluoride is added to table salt. So, there you have it. The methods might vary from one country to the next, but dozens of nations and hundreds of millions of people around the world are reaping the benefits that come from fortifying foods or beverages with fluoride.

Circulate this [one-pager](#) and add it on your website to help spread the word: there's proof around the globe that fluoridation works.

Fight Fiction with Facts

Some well-meaning people in your community may have concerns about fluoride. Usually, it's because of something they read on a web page or on their Facebook feed. Many of them don't realize how anti-fluoride groups misrepresent the facts. It can be frustrating to see people post falsehoods about fluoride online, but it's our responsibility to help set the record straight. Franklin Roosevelt [said it best](#): "Repetition does not transform a lie into a truth."

Facts are the best way to fight fiction. This [Myths & Facts document](#) is a great resource to share. During Children's Dental Health Month, consider sharing this with health professionals, children's advocates, parent's organizations and other groups in your state.

Another helpful resource is [In Their Own Words](#). This e-booklet shares statements from nearly 100 health, medical and children's organizations and experts, who share their views about community water fluoridation. From the American Academy of Family Physicians to U.S. Surgeons General, this e-booklet demonstrates the strong consensus that exists in support of fluoridation.

It's up to us to help answer their questions as clearly and completely as we can. They deserve the truth.

A Web of Misinformation about Fluoride

The internet has opened the door to so many helpful resources. However, not everything one reads online is true. As we observe the 70th anniversary of community water fluoridation this year, keep in mind that various websites post [false](#) or [misleading](#) information about fluoride. Many of these sites post ads for water filters or sell products by encouraging fear of fluoride. But don't be fooled by these websites.

The National Research Council has issued [five reports](#) about fluoride or fluoridation since the 1950s. In fact, three of these reports have been issued since 1993, and the most recent was published as recently as 2007. None of them has raised concerns about the safety or effectiveness of community water fluoridation. Not a single one.

Avoiding fluoridated water won't make you healthier. In fact, it will raise your risk of tooth decay. Remember that the leading health and medical organizations are united in supporting fluoridation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called [fluoridation](#) one of "ten great public health achievements" of the 20th century.

So, drink to your health by drinking fluoridated water. Your teeth will thank you.

Tap Water: Fights Cavities, Saves Money

We're all looking for ways to live healthier lives, but it's an added bonus when one of those approaches also saves money. Tap water is a good example.

Most community water systems in the U.S. provide tap water with enough fluoride to help prevent tooth decay. It's also easier on our wallet too. In a [Kentucky city](#), calculations showed a gallon of bottled water cost about \$7.20, compared to only .004 cents for a gallon of local tap water. Industry experts say bottled water is [300 times](#) more costly than tap water.

Bottled water drinkers are more likely than other consumers to cite "health" as a reason for their purchasing habits, but the Mayo Clinic [reports](#) that tap and bottled water "are generally comparable in terms of safety." An environmental expert [stressed](#) that "no one should think that bottled water is better regulated, better protected or safer than tap."

Of course, let's not forget fluoride — most brands of bottled water don't have enough of it to help prevent cavities. According to [a report](#) last year, only about one out of seven children received preventive dental services over the course of the year studied. Considering that many kids go without regular dental visits, fluoridated water is one of the few steady forms of prevention they receive. Why pay more money for drinking water that lacks sufficient fluoride?

Finally, it's worth considering our environment. According to the [Pacific Institute](#), it took nearly 900,000 tons of plastic to produce all of the water bottles sold to Americans in 2006. This plastic is produced from fossil fuels. And almost all of those plastic bottles end up in landfills.

Please consider these facts the next time you choose the drinking water for yourself or your family.

Why Fluoride Matters

Community water fluoridation began 70 years ago. Nearly three out of four Americans whose homes are connected to public water systems receive water that is fluoridated. As we talk about fluoridation, we must never lose sight of the reason why our nation has embraced this proven health practice. Let's take a walk down Memory Lane.

During World War II, military recruits and draftees were required to have a minimum number of teeth in their mouth. Yet dental health was generally so poor in America that the U.S. Army [reports](#) that the number of enlistees who were disqualified for dental reasons “far exceeded all expectations.”

The situation was so bad that a brigadier general [wrote](#) that “we must provide the means for adequate dental service to correct the dental health of drafted men. The entire plan for dental service in time of mobilization has been revised to meet the conditions which we are certain will exist in every Army camp.”

For civilians in the U.S., dental health was also a major problem before water fluoridation began. Cavities were common. Consider the tooth decay suffered by Indiana children. In the late 1950s, a [survey](#) of the state’s school children found that the average 13 year-old had more than six decayed, missing or filled teeth (DMFT). As access to both fluoridated water and dental care improved, tooth decay dropped significantly among this age group. By the early 1980s, the average DMFT among Indiana’s 13 year-olds was below two. A 2000-01 [survey](#) showed that tooth decay among Indiana children had fallen by 70% since 1958.

Fluoridation is certainly not the only reason for Indiana’s improved oral health, but it has been a key pillar of the state’s prevention strategies.

The Cavity-Learning Link

Preventing tooth decay is one reason given for why so many communities across America add a small amount of fluoride to their drinking water — a process called fluoridation. Even more importantly, preventing cavities helps to strengthen Americans’ overall health and success. Education is a very good example.

UCLA researchers [found](#) that California children missed an estimated 874,000 school days in one academic year due to toothaches or other dental problems. Other researchers in California have [linked](#) dental pain to lower grade point averages among teens. That’s only one state, but it provides a powerful snapshot of how dental problems can undermine children’s learning.

Infected teeth or other serious dental problems can land children in hospital emergency rooms. One study [discovered](#) that dental-related visits by children to New York State hospitals cost more than \$31 million over five years. In addition to the expenses, consider the pain and fear that those kids endured as they arrived in an ER.

Fluoridation isn’t a silver bullet, but it should be one of the pillars of a state’s oral health prevention strategy.

“Please Pass the Fluoride”

We cherish the values of our grandparents, but we do not wish to experience the extent of tooth decay that many of them suffered. Back then, most elderly Americans had lost some or all of their teeth. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [credits](#) water fluoridation and other sources of fluoride for reducing the percentage of adults (ages 60+) who have lost their teeth.

Health officials around the country have taken these findings to heart, and that’s why [most people](#) are served by community water systems in the U.S. that engage in a process called “fluoridation.” In fact, fluoridation began [70 years ago](#) in the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in water supplies, and fluoridation is a process in which the level of this mineral is adjusted to the amount that is proven to combat tooth decay. Usually, fluoridation is accomplished by adding a small amount of fluoride to reach the optimal level. This optimal level is the equivalent of roughly [one drop](#) of fluoride in 55 gallons of water.

Such a small amount of fluoride can mean such a big difference for our teeth. In fact, the American Public Health Association [reports](#): “Much of the credit for the nation’s better oral health can be attributed to the decision in the 1940s to begin adding fluoride to public drinking water systems.”

Yet tooth decay remains the most common chronic disease of childhood. Americans should brush their teeth regularly with fluoride toothpaste, eat a healthy diet, and drink fluoridated water or beverages that are made with fluoridated water.

Europe & Fluoridation: A Quick Fact Check

When some people read a [headline](#) like “Europe rejects fluoridation,” they tend to assume that it’s true. It’s important for health and children’s advocates to clarify misleading statements like this so the public has an accurate understanding of community water fluoridation, where it occurs and why it makes sense. To help you, here are some key facts to share.

First, water fluoridation reaches [13 million](#) people in Ireland, Spain, Poland and Britain. Second, salt fluoridation reaches more than [80 million](#) people in Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium and other countries. Third, millions of Europeans benefit from milk fluoridation, school fluoride-rinse programs and other forms of fluoride. Does this sound like a continent rejecting fluoridation? Of course not.

In fact, the European Platform for Better Oral Health issued [a report](#) recommending a range of effective prevention initiatives, including water fluoridation programs. Several years ago, the European Academy of Pediatric Dentistry issued a [report](#) reaffirming its support for fluoridation.

The Europe myth is one of many that you may hear about fluoridation. Visit this [web page](#) or share it with others to separate the myths from the facts. You can download a copy and print it as needed.

Fluoridation: Helping to Reduce the Cavity Gap

Everyone's teeth benefit from fluoridated water. One of the reasons this strategy is endorsed by the leading health and medical organizations is because research shows that fluoridation reduce the gaps in tooth decay rates between children of different income levels.

This 2002 peer-reviewed [research article](#) called community water fluoridation “the most effective and practical method” for reducing the gap in decay rates between low-income and upper-income Americans. In fact, the study concluded: “There is no practical alternative to water fluoridation for reducing these disparities in the United States.”

In 2014, British researchers strengthened the evidence that fluoridation minimizes the tooth decay gap. They examined the rate of hospital admissions for tooth extractions (because of tooth decay) in economically disadvantaged areas of England. [Their study](#) found that the most disadvantaged district in the non-fluoridated region had a hospital admission rate that was **27 times higher** than the rate of the most disadvantaged district in a fluoridated region. That's quite a difference.

A 2013 Canadian health [report](#) warned that a city that ended fluoridation would be punishing disadvantaged families the most. “Given the inequitable access to and lower utilization of dental services, those with lower income will be less able to ensure adequate fluoride exposure if water fluoridation is removed.”

We'll let the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have the [final word](#): “A person's income and ability to get routine dental care are not barriers since all residents of a community can enjoy fluoride's protective benefits just by drinking tap water and consuming foods and beverages prepared with it.”

When the Public Gets the Facts, Fluoride Wins

Opponents of community water fluoridation try their best to make it sound as if city after city is deciding to cease this proven health practice. That's simply not true. The election last November provided good evidence of the fact that when voters are armed with the facts, fluoridation prevails.

Seven of the eight communities where fluoridation was placed on the ballot [voted](#) in support of continuing this practice. And the margins of victory weren't even close. Whether it was Washington State or Michigan, voters who heard the facts (instead of the scare tactics) recognized the importance of drinking fluoridated water.

However, if this issue comes up in your community, don't *assume* that people will hear the facts. Join others in your community and get the word out, far and wide. Sharing the facts is easy, thanks to the Campaign for Dental Health. The Campaign has excellent resources for [parents](#) and [health professionals](#) — and even these [videos](#). And several of these resources are available in [Spanish](#) too.

Distorting a Report

Opponents of fluoridation often [point](#) to the National Research Council's (NRC) 2006 report as a reason to fear fluoridated water. But they leave out key details. For example, the NRC itself [explained](#) that the conclusions its report "do not apply at the lower water fluoride levels commonly experienced by most U.S. citizens." That's an important detail to ignore.

Here's another detail worth considering. John Doull, the distinguished toxicologist who chaired the 2006 NRC committee, was asked a couple of years ago for his views of water fluoridation. Doull [said](#) he did not see "any valid scientific reason for fearing adverse health conditions" from drinking fluoridated water.

The lesson is simple: you can't believe everything you read about fluoride. Let's spread the word about fluoridation's benefits and be prepared to clarify the myths that some people are circulating.