

Letters to the Editor (LTEs)

Note: Feel free to add a few sentences to any of the 16 letters below, but be sure to count the number of words in your LTE before you submit it to a newspaper. Keep in mind that most newspapers prefer LTEs that are no longer than 300 words. All of the LTEs in this file are less than 250 words.

Letters are much more likely to be published if they are related to recent news, studies or events in your state or community. Look for ways to make that connection in the very first paragraph. Some letters contain highlighted words you will need to review and/or change to fit your personal/community circumstances.

Please read each LTE carefully to make sure it applies to your community or state. For example, the first letter is written with the assumption that the writer lives in a state where most households on public water systems receive fluoridated water. This is **not** true for the states of Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon and Wyoming.

Dear editor,

January 25, 2025 was the 80th anniversary of water fluoridation in America. I'm pleased to know that [your city/town] adds a small amount of fluoride to its drinking water to help reduce the risk of tooth decay. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that fluoridated water reduces tooth decay by 25 percent over a person's lifetime.

Tooth decay might not seem like a big deal, but research shows that a child with dental problems is about three times more likely to be absent from school. In our economy, adults who are looking for work cannot afford to show up at a job interview with unhealthy or missing teeth. Whether it should or not, having "bad teeth" will disqualify many adults from the jobs they are seeking. The consequences of poor dental health can easily move right from someone's mouth to their wallet.

Brushing with fluoride toothpaste is important, as is limiting the amount of sugary foods and beverages. But the CDC says that fluoridated water provides crucial, added protection against tooth decay. U.S. Surgeons General have consistently supported fluoridation too.

Dear editor,

February is Children's Dental Health Month, which is a good time for parents to consider what kind of water their children are drinking. Virtually all drinking water contains fluoride, but most brands of bottled water don't have enough fluoride to protect teeth from cavities.

Tap water in most of our state's communities is fortified with fluoride. That's good news because fluoridated water helps to make the tooth enamel more resistant to cavities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention endorse water fluoridation, and so do other leading organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Institute of Medicine.

For this reason, parents should be encouraged to consider making tap water their family's source of drinking water. It will save families money and help them avoid the pain or stigma from having dental problems.

Dear editor,

I often use the internet to find information, but I was reminded recently why people have to consider the source when they read a web page. Last week, I stumbled on a website that attacked community water fluoridation. This website relied heavily on hearsay and talked about fluoride as if it were a harmful chemical.

Fluoride is a mineral that occurs naturally in all water supplies. The only question is whether the amount of fluoride reaches the level that has been proven to reduce the risk of cavities. Many communities in **[insert your state]** add a small, additional amount to help prevent tooth decay. This practice is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dental Association and virtually every major medical or health organization.

I've noticed that many of the websites claiming that fluoridation is harmful post advertisements that are aimed at selling water filters or other products. When someone's trying to sell me something, I'm reminded of that rule: "Consider the source." Let this be a lesson to all of us who surf the web.

Dear editor,

There are so many important issues our elected officials need to address. It bothers me to see them distracted by topics that are raised by people who are driven by ideological or hidden motives. A good example is community water fluoridation.

Recently, a handful of activists urged **[name of your city/town]** to stop fluoridating its water. Every leading medical and health organization supports adding a little fluoride to drinking water to help prevent tooth decay. Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in water, but usually at a concentration that is too low to help prevent cavities. The Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention has praised this approach as one of the “great public health achievements” over the past century. Fluoridation is backed by 70-plus years of research and experience.

When politicians start second-guessing physicians, dentists and scientists, you know something is very wrong. We should hold our elected officials accountable and insist that they focus their attention where it belongs — on fiscal responsibility, quality education and other things that really matter to us.

Dear editor,

The “good old days” weren’t so great when it came to our health. I can still remember seeing my grandmother’s dentures resting in a cleaning solution. She grew up at a time when we didn’t have fluoride toothpaste or fluoridated water, and many people reached adulthood without a full set of teeth. Sadly, a handful of vocal people in our state are trying to persuade local officials to stop fluoridating our water. They seem determined to turn back the clock to days when many people had mouths filled with decayed teeth.

Opponents say that fluoride only works when applied as a high-concentration toothpaste to the surface of a tooth. I checked out the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and I learned this claim is false. When people drink fluoridated water, trace levels of the fluoride remain in the mouth over the course of a day and combine with saliva to coat the teeth enamel, helping to protect it.

If people want to ignore what the scientific evidence shows, they can do so. But they shouldn’t be pushing communities to do something that will increase the costs and discomfort associated with dental problems.

Dear editor,

I am surprised to see that a small group of people are attacking water fluoridation in [name of your city/town]. Have I missed something? I don’t think so. All the leading health and medical organizations endorse fluoridation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics are just a few examples.

Hundreds of studies have been done, and the facts are clear: fluoridation is a safe and effective way to reduce the rate of tooth decay. A British historian once said, “Get the

facts, or the facts will get you.” The facts support fluoridation. Ending water fluoridation would expose children and adults to higher rates of tooth decay, not to mention the additional costs of treating them at a dental office.

We shouldn’t allow a handful of people to distract us from the facts with empty claims. They are entitled to their own opinions, but they aren’t to their own facts.

Dear editor,

In January 2015, America celebrated the 70th anniversary of community water fluoridation. Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in water supplies, even in the ocean. In the 1930s and ’40s, American researchers discovered there was an ideal level for fluoride that would help to prevent tooth decay. This is why so many communities add a little more fluoride to their water.

Water fluoridation is a big reason why children today have much less tooth decay than they had 40 or 50 years ago. Still, tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease — even more common than asthma. Like other diseases, tooth decay will only get worse unless it’s treated. Of course, the best approach is to prevent cavities from happening in the first place. Brushing with fluoride toothpaste and eating a healthy diet are important, and so is drinking fluoridated water.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have called water fluoridation one of the 10 “great public health achievements of the 20th century.” The CDC explains that fluoridation works because it provides teeth “with frequent contact with low levels of fluoride throughout each day and throughout life.” Best of all, fluoridation is the least expensive way to get fluoride’s benefits.

The next time you reach for a glass of fluoridated water, drink a toast to your teeth.

Dear editor,

People are entitled to their own opinions but not to their own facts. The small group of activists in [insert name of city/town] that is attacking water fluoridation relies on claims that come from inaccurate websites and other discredited sources.

With all of the *real* problems we face, it’s disturbing that a small group of people would try to manufacture a new “problem” by making lots of unsupported claims about fluoridated

water. I urge my fellow residents to contact their city council members and tell them they support water fluoridation. PolitiFact, an independent fact-checking service, examined three common arguments that anti-fluoride groups use and found that each one was false or deceptive.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called fluoridated water one of 10 “great public health achievements” of the 20th century. If opponents have their way, they will take us back to the 19th century.

Dear editor,

Seventy years ago this month, America began using a process called water fluoridation to reduce the rate of tooth decay. It has been a big success. When I watched TV in the 1970s, there were a lot of commercials for denture products. Why? Because many older adults had lost all or most of their teeth because they grew up without fluoridated water.

Fortunately, the situation began to change in January 1945 when city officials in Grand Rapids, Michigan began adding a small amount of fluoride to their drinking water. Their cavity rates fell dramatically. More and more communities began fluoridating their water, lowering cavity rates. Within the past few years, studies in Nevada, New York and other states show that fluoridation continues to be helpful in reducing tooth decay and saving families money because they need fewer dental treatments.

I was surprised recently to see someone post a negative message about community water fluoridation. Maybe they can't appreciate what I have witnessed with my own eyes — more and more adults living longer with healthy teeth, thanks partly to fluoridated water.

Dear editor,

Everything the government does costs money. It's hard to find a program of any kind that actually saves more than it costs, but community water fluoridation is one of those rare examples.

Fluoridation occurs when a local water system adds a small amount of additional fluoride to help prevent tooth decay. I went to the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and I learned that every \$1 invested in fluoridation saves \$38 by avoiding the need for fillings and more costly dental treatments.

I can't think of any investment that returns \$38 for every \$1 that is invested. I wish my mutual funds performed that well.

Dear editor,

I want to set the record straight about the claims made in a recent letter to the editor. This letter claimed that the fluoride that is added to drinking water is a "toxic" waste product. In fact, the opposite is true.

Fluoride is a mineral that occurs naturally in water supplies. In the 1940s, U.S. researchers found that we could reduce tooth decay significantly if we adjust the fluoride to a certain level. In most communities, this means adding a little more fluoride. Water fluoridation has been endorsed by numerous U.S. surgeons general, as well as by the leading health and medical organizations.

I know that there are new studies coming out every day telling us that something is bad for us. But the good news is that water fluoridation is not new. It has been used for more than 70 years in America to safely reduce the rate of tooth decay. Hundreds of studies have confirmed its safety and effectiveness.

Don't be misled or confused by claims about fluoridation. It's a made-in-America way to help prevent tooth decay.

Dear editor,

As someone who cares about the environment, I'm concerned to see so many people in our community drinking water from plastic bottles that eventually end up in landfills. The Pacific Institute reports that 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 – typically oil or gas. Even more energy is wasted transporting bottled water by truck or rail.

The carbon pollution and all of that plastic waste could be avoided if people drank tap water instead. However, I learned something recently that provides another reason for people to choose tap water over bottled water. Most U.S. communities with a public water system fluoridate their water because it's proven to help prevent tooth decay. Yet most brands of bottled water do not contain enough fluoride. That exposes children and adults to a greater risk of cavities.

This gives us three very good reasons for choosing tap water over bottled water. It's better for teeth, it's better for the environment, and it's easier on our wallets.

Dear editor,

In an era when the news covers the issues of terrorism and Ebola, we have plenty to worry about. It concerns me when someone relies on rumor or speculation to stir up unwarranted fear. I am referring to the letter that recently appeared in this newspaper about water fluoridation.

I am willing to match my sources against anyone's when it comes to water fluoridation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called it one of the 10 "great public health achievements" of the 20th century. The American Public Health Association supports fluoridation, and so does the American Academy of Family Physicians. The leading professional organizations for pediatricians and dentists also endorse fluoridation.

No major medical or health organization opposes fluoridation. Not one. There is an opposition group called the Fluoride Action Network, and they have a slick-looking website. However, this group promotes a conspiracy theory about fluoride, and it cites "research" from a man who claimed that the HIV virus doesn't cause AIDS.

This is about credibility. Don't be fooled by misinformation. Let's stand with the doctors, dentists and other health professionals who support of water fluoridation.

Dear editor,

I am very concerned to hear that a small but vocal group of people are trying to end water fluoridation in [name of city/town]. They are seeking this change even though fluoridation has helped to protect teeth from tooth decay and, therefore, saves us money.

Many of them may be well-intentioned, but they are relying on fears and claims that are not based on real science. All of the leading health and medical organizations support fluoridation. These include the Institute of Medicine, the American Dental Association, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

People can get the facts about water fluoridation by visiting ILikeMyTeeth.org, a website that is operated by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Fluoridation protects our teeth and our wallets. In fact, a study commissioned by the CDC found that every dollar spent on fluoridation saves \$38 by reducing the need for fillings, crowns and other dental procedures. The anti-fluoride crowd may have money to burn, but I do not. Fluoridation deserves our support.

Dear editor,

It seems that we parents can always learn something new, especially when it comes to helping our children grow up with healthy teeth and mouths. It might surprise you to learn that most brands of bottled water do not have enough fluoride to help protect teeth. Drinking tap water that is fluoridated is the best way to reduce your children's risk of tooth decay.

If your kids brush their teeth regularly with fluoride toothpaste, that's good, but it isn't giving them full protection against cavities. The American Dental Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend fluoridated water. Why? As the CDC's website 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."

Think about it. Your kitchen faucet provides a simple, inexpensive way to help prevent tooth decay. Keep on encouraging your kids to have good dental habits, and do your part to make sure they're getting fluoride through tap water or beverages made with tap water.

Dear editor,

I enjoyed reading your news story [insert headline & date of this story in parentheses] about children's dental health, but the article missed an opportunity to cite a key factor that has helped reduce the rate of tooth decay among kids from what it used to be when I was a child. That factor is community water fluoridation.

Fluoride is a mineral that occurs naturally in water supplies, but most public water systems in the United States need to add just a little more to bring the fluoride to a level that has been proven to reduce the rate of cavities. Even with other sources of fluoride such as toothpaste, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that fluoridated water reduces tooth decay by 25 percent over a person's lifetime.

Less tooth decay means fewer dollars spent on fillings, crowns or other dental treatments and fewer toothaches. Most brands of bottled water do not contain enough fluoride to prevent cavities, so parents should keep this in mind.

That old saying is true: an ounce of prevention *is* worth a pound of cure.