

What you should know about fluoride

Recent news articles about fluoride have revived questions about the benefits and risks associated with fluoridated drinking water. The American Dental Association (ADA), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to support community water fluoridation as a safe and cost-effective way to fight tooth decay and improve oral health. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions and the latest scientific information about fluoride:

What does fluoride do to my teeth?

Fluoride reinforces your teeth and makes them more resistant to cavities. Your need for fluoride depends on your risk level for tooth decay. Your dentist can help you ensure that you receive enough fluoride to protect your teeth.

Is fluoride safe?

Yes. Fluoride is safe when used and consumed properly. (Other substances that are beneficial in the correct amounts and harmful in the wrong ones include salt, vitamins A and D, iron, iodine, and aspirin—even water itself!)

Although fluoride has been blamed for a number of diseases, no credible scientific evidence to date has demonstrated a correlation between optimal fluoride consumption and these diseases.

Why add fluoride to drinking water?

Decades of research and numerous credible scientific studies provide substantial evidence that community water fluoridation is a safe and effective way to improve oral health.

Fluoridated water has played an important role in reducing tooth decay in children and tooth loss in adults. Thanks to fluoridated water, half of all children ages five to 17 have never had a cavity in their permanent teeth.

In fact, the CDC calls community water fluoridation “...the single most effective public health measure to prevent dental decay and improve oral health over a lifetime for both children and adults,” and named it as one of the top 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.

Source: American Dental Association, Fluoridation Facts—United States 2005

