

THE FACTS ON FLUORIDE

Dental disease is the number one chronic disease among children and adolescents in North America. Water fluoridation is the most important public health measure used to effectively and inexpensively counteract the disease.

What are the benefits of fluoride?

Fluoride can greatly help dental health by strengthening the tooth enamel, making it more resistant to tooth decay. It also reduces the amount of acid that the bacteria on your teeth produce. According to a New York study, fluoridated communities have 20% less tooth decay and every dollar spent on water fluoridation avoids an estimated \$38 in dental care per person per year.

Fluoridation is the process of adjusting the inorganic fluoride compound in municipal water supplies to the level of fluoride that is optimal for dental benefits. The fluoridation of drinking water supplies is a well-accepted measure to protect public health and is strongly supported by scientific evidence. Fluoride has been supplementing public drinking water supplies around the world for more than half a century, as a public dental health measure.

Health Canada's website states that "the big advantage of water fluoridation is that it benefits all residents in a community regardless of age, social economic status, education or employment."

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How much is 0.7 parts per million?

The guideline for fluoride is a maximum acceptable concentration (MAC) of 1.5 parts per million (ppm). Exposure to fluoride at or below this MAC will not cause any adverse health effects, taking into account all other sources of exposure to fluoride.

The optimal level at which the protective effect of fluoride occurs is called the optimal concentration, and is well below the MAC. For communities that choose to fluoridate their drinking water, the level of fluoride that is optimal in preventing tooth decay is 0.7 ppm. In simpler terms, this is like one penny in \$10,000; one minute in two years; or 1 drop in about 50 litres of water.

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Why are foods fortified for health benefits?

Many of the foods we consume have added health benefits such as: Iodized salt for prevention of thyroid disorders, decrease iodine deficiency; Vitamin D found in milk is for healthy bones, decreases Osteoporosis, some cancers, reduced exposure to sun in winter months; B vitamins, often referred to as B complex vitamins, help the body metabolize fats

and protein. B complex vitamins are necessary for healthy skin, hair, eyes and liver. They also help the nervous system function properly. Vitamins Niacin and Riboflavin are usually added to breads to provide us with increased health benefits, just like fluoride in your drinking water.

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