



Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry
Association canadienne de la santé dentaire publique

Position Statement on Community Water Fluoridation, September 2014

The Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry endorses community water fluoridation as an important public health measure to prevent dental caries (tooth decay) in a population. It is safe, effective, ethical, legal, reduces oral health disparities and is cost-effective.

Rationale

Community water fluoridation started in Canada in 1945 and, up to the present, a substantial body of scientific research has been accumulated on its efficacy and safety. More than 3,000 studies published in recognized peer-reviewed journals have been reviewed and analyzed repeatedly. The results from the highest quality research have been compiled into systematic reviews and reports to provide the best available evidence and guidance about community water fluoridation to improve dental health. Since 1997, a significant number of systematic reviews and reports on community water fluoridation and the effect of fluorides have been published in: Europe,^{1,2} the United Kingdom,^{3,4} Ireland,⁵ Australia,⁶⁻⁸ New Zealand,⁹ the United States^{10a-c,11-13} and Canada^{14,15}. Most recently, in Canada, Health Canada released the "Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality: Guideline Technical Document — Fluoride,"¹⁶ and the Government of Canada's, "Joint Government Response to Environmental Petition Number 221: Petition to Discontinue Water Fluoridation."¹⁷ Additionally, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec¹⁸ released its report, "Water fluoridation: An analysis of the health benefits and risks."

The major conclusions from all these reviews and reports are:

- Community water fluoridation is safe. The weight of scientific research supports no increased risk of cancer, bone disease, I.Q. deficits, thyroid suppression, kidney disease, diseases of the immune or reproductive systems, nor genetic, neurological, developmental, or any other health effects.
- Community water fluoridation is effective in preventing tooth decay even when other sources of fluoride, e.g. toothpastes, topical fluorides, are used.
- The only adverse effect linked to community water fluoridation at the recommended level is an increased risk of mild dental fluorosis. It is a cosmetic, not a health effect, and mild dental fluorosis is not noticed by most people.
- Community water fluoridation is a public health measure that benefits all residents served by community water supplies, regardless of their age, sex, culture, social or economic status or educational level.
- Scientific research finds no evidence of negative environmental impacts from adding controlled amounts of fluoride to the drinking water.

References:

1. SCHER, Opinion on critical review of any new evidence on the hazard profile, health effects, and human exposure to fluoride and the fluoridating agents of drinking water - 16 May 2011.
2. World Health Organization. Fluoride in drinking water. World Health Organization 2006.
3. McDonagh, M., Whiting, P., Bradley, M., Cooper, J., et al. A Systematic review of public water fluoridation. NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, University of York 2000.
4. United Kingdom Medical Research Council. Water fluoridation and health. United Kingdom Medical Research Council 2002.
5. Irish Ministry for Health and Children. Forum on fluoridation. Irish Ministry for Health and Children 2002.
6. Lord Mayor's Taskforce on Fluoridation. Report of the Lord Mayor's Taskforce on Fluoridation. Lord Mayor's Taskforce on Fluoridation 1997.
7. National Health and Medical Research Council Australia. Review of water fluoridation and fluoride intake from discretionary fluoride supplements. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia 1999.
8. National Health and Medical Research Council Australia. Systematic review of the efficacy and safety of fluoridation. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia 2007.
9. The Royal Society of New Zealand. Health Effects of Water Fluoridation: A Review of the Scientific Evidence. A Report on Behalf of the Royal Society of New Zealand and the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor. August 2014
- 10a. Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Comparison of selected interventions to prevent dental caries, oral and pharyngeal cancers and sports-related craniofacial injuries. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2002; 23(18):55-80.
- 10b. Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations on selected interven-

- tions to prevent dental caries, oral and pharyngeal cancers and sports-related craniofacial injuries. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2002; 23(18):16-20.
- 10c. Gooch B.F., Suleman I., Gift H.C., Task Force on Community Preventive Services, et al. Reviews of evidence on interventions to prevent dental caries, oral and pharyngeal cancers and sports-related craniofacial injuries. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2002; 23(18):21-54.
11. Lepo, J. E. and Snyder, Richard A. Impact of fluoridation of municipal drinking water supply: review of the literature. Escambia County Utilities Authority 2000.
12. United States Centers for Disease Control. Recommendations for using fluoride to prevent and control dental caries in the United States. MMWR 2001; 50(RR14):1-42.
13. NRC, National Research Council Committee on Fluoride in Drinking Water (2006). "Fluoride in the Drinking Water: A Scientific Review of EPA's Standards" <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11571.html#toc>.
14. Locker, D. Benefits and risks of water fluoridation: an update of the 1996 federal provincial sub-committee report. Ontario Ministry of Health 1999.
15. Expert Panel for Water Fluoridation Review. Report of the Expert Panel for Water Fluoridation Review. Calgary Health Region 1998.
16. Health Canada (2010) Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality: Guideline Technical Document — Fluoride. Water, Air and Climate Change Bureau, Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch, Health Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.
17. Government of Canada. Joint Government of Canada response to environmental petition number 221: Petition to discontinue water fluoridation. Government of Canada 2008.
18. Levy, M., Corbeil F., Lavalliere A, et al. Water fluoridation: an analysis of the health benefits and risks. Institut national de santé publique du Québec 2007.