

## Fluoridation Position Statement

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the New Brunswick Dental Society support the fluoridation of public drinking water supplies in New Brunswick. Water fluoridation is a safe, effective, equitable and economical means of preventing dental cavities. Cavities and gum disease may contribute to many serious conditions, such as diabetes and respiratory diseases. Untreated cavities can also be painful and lead to serious infections.

Fluoride is a natural element that is found in soil, water (both fresh and salt) and in various foods. Fluorides protect tooth enamel against the acids that cause tooth decay. Most Canadians are exposed to fluorides on a daily basis, through the trace amounts that are found in almost all foods, toothpastes and mouth rinses, and some drinking water supplies. Although alternative means to obtain fluoride are available, fluoridation of the drinking water supply ensures the benefits of fluoride are equally available to all regardless of socioeconomic status, education, income or race/ethnicity.

Scientific evidence supports the fluoridation of drinking water as an appropriate measure to protect public health. More than 90 national and international professional health organizations including Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Dental Association and the Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry, the Canadian Medical Association and the World Health Organization endorse the use of fluoride at recommended levels to prevent dental cavities.

The value of water fluoridation should not be underestimated. The benefits of fluoridation are well documented, even with the availability of other sources of fluoride:

- Fluoridated drinking water greatly reduces the number of dental cavities in children's teeth, the single most common preventable childhood disease. Water fluoridation is particularly beneficial to seniors and individuals living in poverty for whom other preventive measures may not be accessible.
- The evidence shows that after a community starts fluoridating water the rates of tooth decay are decreased, and that in communities where they stop fluoridating water the rates of tooth decay increase.
- It is estimated that the cost of dental care in Canada reached 11.7 billion in 2012, making it the second largest item in private sector health care spending, after drugs.
- Cost-benefit studies show that the economic benefits of community water fluoridation exceed its costs, with annual benefits ranging between \$5.49 and \$93.19 per person.

The safety and efficacy of water fluoridation has been frequently studied and continues to be supported by current science. A review by an expert panel, Health Canada and Canadian Chief Dental Officer showed that for communities who add fluoride, the optimal concentration of fluoride in drinking water to promote dental health has been determined to be 0.7 milligrams per litre. Levels of naturally occurring fluoride in public water supplies fall well below this optimal concentration in the vast majority of New Brunswick communities. Health Canada has established the guideline for fluoride in drinking water as a maximum acceptable concentration of 1.5 milligrams per litre. Water containing fluoride at, or below, this maximum acceptable concentration does not pose a risk to human health.

## References

### Position Statements

#### Health Canada

It's Your Health: Fluoride and Human Health, updated 2010  
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/environ/fluor-eng.php>

#### Public Health Agency of Canada

Position Statement on Community Water Fluoridation (from Canada's Chief Public Health Officer and Chief Dental Officer), 2016

#### Canadian Dental Association (CDA)

CDA's Position on the Use of Fluorides in Caries Prevention, revised March 2012  
[https://www.cda-adc.ca/files/position\\_statements/fluoride.pdf](https://www.cda-adc.ca/files/position_statements/fluoride.pdf)

#### Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)

Fight the Good Fight: Fluoridation of Drinking Water, 2010  
<http://www.cpha.ca/en/programs/history/achievements/05-he/fluoridation.aspx>

#### Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry (CAPHD)

Position Statement on Community Water Fluoridation, September 2014  
[http://www.caphd.ca/sites/default/files/CAPHD\\_CWF\\_PositionStatement\\_EN\\_Sep\\_2014\\_1.pdf](http://www.caphd.ca/sites/default/files/CAPHD_CWF_PositionStatement_EN_Sep_2014_1.pdf)

#### World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Oral Health Report, 2003  
[http://www.who.int/oral\\_health/media/en/orh\\_report03\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/oral_health/media/en/orh_report03_en.pdf)

#### Federation Dentaire Internationale (FDI)

Promoting Dental Health through Water Fluoridation, Revised September 2014  
[http://www.fdiworldental.org/media/55250/4-fdi\\_ps-water\\_fluoridation\\_approved\\_gab\\_2014.pdf](http://www.fdiworldental.org/media/55250/4-fdi_ps-water_fluoridation_approved_gab_2014.pdf)

### Scientific Evidence

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<http://www.bmj.com/content/321/7265/855.full>

McLaren L, McIntyre L. Drinking water fluoridation in Canada: Review and synthesis of published literature [Internet]. Calgary: Department of Community Health Services, University of Calgary; 2011 [cited 2016 Dec 16]. Available from: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/poph/hi-poph-surv-phids-drinking-water-fluoridation.pdf>

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[http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(15\)00691-1/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(15)00691-1/abstract)