

Community Water Fluoridation: A Public Health Imperative

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Fluoridated water is considered one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20th century.

Just the facts:

- An estimated 72 million, or almost 30% of all people in the United States, are served by non-fluoridated public water systems.
- Community water fluoridation reduces tooth decay by an estimated 25% over a lifetime.
- Nearly one in four children living in low-income families has untreated tooth decay; tooth decay remains the most common chronic disease of childhood.
- On average, people that live in fluoridated water communities have 25% fewer trips to the dentist than people in communities with non-fluoridated water.
- Frequent exposure to the optimal fluoride concentration in water is an effective strategy to reduce the risk of tooth decay at the population level because it does not require any individual behavioral change.

Fluoridated water reduces health care costs.

Consider this:

- Community water fluoridation has been shown to save money for families and the health care system.
- For every dollar spent on community water fluoridation, \$38 is saved in health care costs.
- Many vulnerable and underserved populations face substantial barriers to accessing dental care, and community water fluoridation ensures adequate fluoride exposure regardless of access to a dentist, insurance coverage or the ability to pay for dental care.



The protective effects of community water fluoridation are experienced across all age, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups, but benefit vulnerable populations the most.

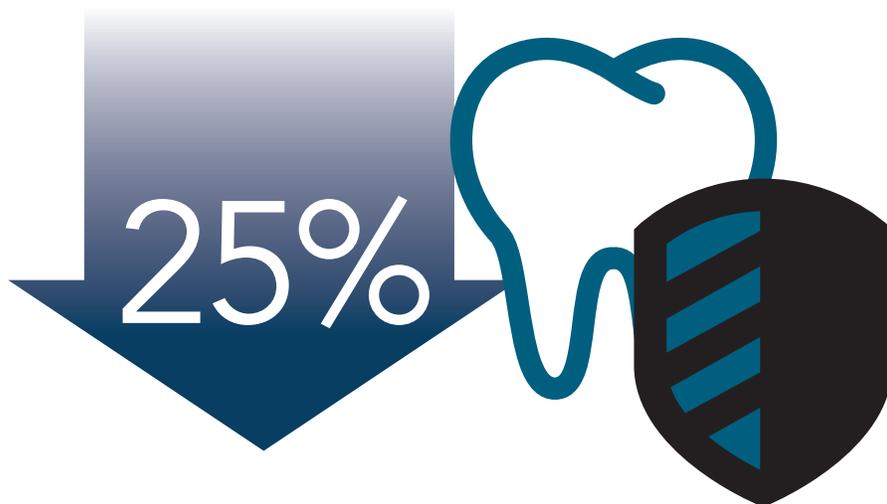


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Fluoridated water's benefits should be explained to patients.

Patients should know:

- Extensive research has consistently demonstrated that adding fluoride to drinking water in appropriate amounts is a safe, cost-effective public health intervention.
- In April 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a final recommendation for the optimal fluoride level in drinking water—0.7 mg/liter.
- The HHS-recommended level of water fluoridation maximizes the benefits of fluoridated water and reduces the potential for fluorosis (tooth discoloration that poses no health risk).
- More than 100 national and international health, service and professional organizations support community water fluoridation, including the American Dental Education Association, American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, United States Public Health Service and World Health Organization.



Estimated rate by which community water fluoridation reduces tooth decay throughout a person's lifetime

Source: Griffin SO, Regnier E, Griffin PM, Huntley VN. Effectiveness of fluoride in preventing caries in adults. J Dent Res 2007;86(5):410-414.

"Community water fluoridation is one of the most practical, cost-effective, equitable and safe measures communities can take to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health."

Vivek H. Murthy, M.D., M.B.A., U.S. Surgeon General

ADEA strongly supports optimal fluoridation of community water. Find additional resources on this topic at adea.org.

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