

Community Water Fluoridation



"...one of the 10 great public health achievements of the twentieth century."¹



Oral Health in West Virginia: A Fact Sheet

Tooth Decay is a Problem!

Oral health is integral to general health. Although preventable, tooth decay is a chronic disease affecting all age groups. In fact, it is the most common chronic disease of childhood. The burden of disease is far worse for those who have limited access to prevention and treatment services. Left untreated, tooth decay can cause pain, tooth loss, and even death. Among children, untreated decay has been associated with difficulty in eating, sleeping, learning and proper nutrition. Among adults, untreated decay and tooth loss can also have negative effects on an individual's self-esteem and employability.²

In the U.S., tooth decay affects⁷:

- ✓ 1 in 3 preschool children
- ✓ 1 in 2 school age children
- ✓ 2 in 3 adolescents
- ✓ 9 out of 10 adults

Community Water Fluoridation Prevents Tooth Decay

Fluoride in community drinking water, adjusted to a concentration of 0.7 parts per million³, continues to be a safe, inexpensive and extremely effective method of preventing tooth decay.⁴

- Community water fluoridation benefits everyone in the community, regardless of age and socioeconomic status.
- Fluoridation provides protection against tooth decay in populations with limited access to prevention services.
- For every dollar spent on community water fluoridation, up to \$38 is saved in dental treatment cost.⁵

The Task Force on Community Preventive Services, a national independent, nonfederal, multidisciplinary task force appointed by the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recently reviewed their systematic review of studies of community water fluoridation. They reconfirmed, in communities initiating fluoridation, the decrease in childhood decay was almost 30 percent over 3–12 years of follow-up.⁶ Communities have fluoridated the water since 1945. In West Virginia water has been fluoridated since 1950.



State⁸ and National Healthy People 2020 Objectives⁹ and Progress

Increase percentage of persons on public water receiving fluoridated water

National HP Goal = 79.6% WV's Current Status = 91.5%

Reduce by 10% adults 65-74 who have lost all their teeth

National HP Goal = 21.0% WV's Current Status = 37.8%

What is West Virginia doing to meet the goals?

West Virginia has: instituted an oral health surveillance system to guide the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs to prevent and control disease, implemented a standardized education curriculum, promoted inter-professional training with dental non-dental providers on appropriate fluoride supplement programs, maintained resources on well-water testing, recognized water systems maintaining optimal levels of fluoride, and utilized fluoride data from water systems.

Strategies for West Virginia's Future

- ✓ Encourage fluoride supplements and/or fluoride treatments for those at increased risk for decay who are not receiving fluoridated drinking water, along with daily brushing with fluoride toothpaste morning and night.
- ✓ Promote accurate, scientific information about fluoride.
- ✓ Encourage the use of dental sealants and school-based dental disease prevention programs

Endorsed by

Community Water Fluoridation is endorsed by the following organizations who support good oral health.



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