

10 Reasons to Fluoridate Public Water

- Fluoride is nature's cavity fighter. It is already present in all water sources, even the ocean. Water fluoridation is the controlled adjustment of the natural fluoride concentration in a public water supply up to the level recommended for preventing tooth decay.
- Fluoridation protects against tooth decay throughout life, benefiting both children and adults. Inadequate exposure to fluoride places children and adults in a high risk category for tooth decay.
- Fluoridation is the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay and to improve oral health for a lifetime, for both children and adults.¹
- An estimated 51 million school hours are lost each year due to dental-related illness.²
- The average cost for a community to fluoridate its water is estimated to range from approximately \$0.50 a year per person in large communities to approximately \$3.00 a year per person in small communities.³ The average cost for one dental filling is \$101.94.⁴
- 67.3 percent of the population or more than 170 million people on public water systems receive fluoridated public water.⁵ The Healthy People 2010 goal is to raise this number to 75 percent by 2010.⁶
- From 2000 through 2006, more than 235 communities in 36 states decided to provide the benefits of fluoridation for their residents.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has proclaimed community water fluoridation one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.
- Studies prove water fluoridation continues to be effective in reducing tooth decay by 20-40%, even in an era with widespread availability of fluoride from other sources, such as fluoride toothpaste.
- The American Dental Association (ADA) endorses fluoridation of community water supplies as safe and effective for preventing tooth decay.

¹Richard H. Carmona, MD, MPH, FACS, VADM, USPHS U.S. Surgeon General July 2004.

²Gift HC. 1997. Oral health outcomes research: Challenges and opportunities. In Sland GD, ed., *Measuring Oral Health and Quality of Life* (pp. 25-46). Chapel Hill, NC: Department of Dental Ecology, University of North Carolina.

³Griffin SO, Jones K, Tomar SL. An economic evaluation of community water fluoridation. *J Public Health Dent* 2001; 61 (2):78-86.

⁴National average fee for a two surface amalgam (silver colored) filling in permanent tooth placed by a general dentist. American Dental Association, Survey Center. 2003 survey of dental fees. Chicago; April 2004.

⁵CDC Water Supply Statistics, 2002.

⁶US Department of Health and Human Services. *Healthy People 2010*. 2nd ed. With understanding and improving health and objectives for improving health. 2 vols. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office; November 2000.