

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently released new guidelines on water fluoridation, meaning that Connecticut needs to update its recommended water fluoridation range to align with HHS. Specifically, Connecticut needs to drop its fluoride level slightly to reflect the fact that in this day and age, people receive fluoride's benefits from multiple sources (e.g., products like mouth rinses). The Connecticut Health Foundation has worked for over 15 years to improve oral health for Connecticut's children and families. We think this a perfect time to review the immense benefits of water fluoridation for our state.

Talking Points

WATER FLUORIDATION: IT'S EFFECTIVE, SAFE AND SAVES MONEY FOR CONNECTICUT FAMILIES AND TAXPAYERS

WATER FLUORIDATION IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO PREVENT TOOTH DECAY

- Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in all water supplies, but usually at levels that are too low to protect against tooth decay. That's why so many communities add a small amount to water supplies, which helps prevent cavities. It's the same reason why salt is fortified with iodine, or milk is fortified with Vitamin D—it keeps us healthier.
- After the Community Preventive Services Task Force reviewed 161 studies, these experts endorsed fluoridation, “based on strong evidence of effectiveness” in reducing tooth decay. And these aren't just older studies—over 30 of the studies are since 1999.
- The experts at the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dental Association, the Institute of Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention agree that water fluoridation is safe and effective.

WATER FLUORIDATION IS SAFE

- The New York Times has reported that conspiracy theories about water fluoridation, “thrive online, where anyone, with a little help from Google, can suddenly become a medical authority.” So, let's address the misinformation out there. A deeply flawed study that claimed fluoride lowered IQ has been debunked by experts at the Yale School of Medicine, the Water Research Foundation, Indiana University's Department of Pediatrics and others. A rigorous study done by Harvard in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute found no link between fluoridation and bone cancer.
- Experts at the Society of Toxicology examined this issue and explained that, “medical scientists have agreed that small concentrations of fluoride have health benefits that vastly exceed any hypothetical health risk.”

WATER FLUORIDATION SAVES MONEY

- An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The CDC found that every dollar spent on water fluoridation saves \$38 from avoiding the costs of tooth decay (e.g., filling cavities, getting crowns). The lifetime cost of dental treatment for one decayed molar can exceed \$6,000. That's money we want to keep in the pockets of families and taxpayers.

AND BEYOND BEING EFFECTIVE, SAFE AND MONEY-SAVING

WATER FLUORIDATION IS A HEALTH EQUITY SOLUTION

- Water fluoridation benefits all Connecticut residents, especially children and families living in poverty who have the least access to dental care.
- In fact, a researcher at the University of Michigan School of Public Health praised fluoridation because it, “moves us toward achieving social equity in oral health, and is a practical and relatively inexpensive method of doing so.”

CONNECTICUT IS A LEADER

- We passed the first water fluoridation law in 1965, which has helped make us a leader among states in good oral health. It's part of our legacy of protecting the health of our residents.



Connecticut Health
FOUNDATION
Changing Systems, Improving Lives.

The Connecticut Health Foundation (CT Health) is the state's largest independent health philanthropy dedicated to improving lives by changing systems. Since it was established in 1999, the foundation has supported innovative grantmaking, public policy research, technical assistance and convening to achieve its mission—to improve the health of the people of Connecticut. Over the past 16 years, CT Health has awarded grants totaling over \$57 million in 45 cities and towns throughout the state. Measurably improving oral health for Connecticut's children and families has been a CT Health priority since inception. To view our oral health policy publications, please visit our publications library at www.cthealth.org.