

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. If people brushed their teeth would it mean we don't need water fluoridation?

Keeping your teeth healthy also requires brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, dental care and reducing sugar. Community water fluoridation provides additional benefits even if you do all these things. Over half of New Zealand adults avoid going to the dentist because of cost, and over half of New Zealand children don't brush their teeth twice a day with the recommended strength fluoride toothpaste. That's why water fluoridation is so important – it makes basic care for your teeth accessible to all.

Q. How do we know it's safe?

Fluoride already exists in water. It is topped up to levels that provide a benefit to teeth. At these carefully monitored levels fluoride is safe and within the guidelines of the World Health Organization and other international public health agencies.

'There has been much research over many decades indicating that fluoridation is a safe and effective measure for reducing dental caries'

Professor Sir David Skegg,
President of the Royal Society of New Zealand

In August 2014, the Royal Society of New Zealand and the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor jointly published the report: *Health effects of water fluoridation: a review of the scientific evidence*. This report found that community water fluoridation within the range of concentrations currently recommended by the Ministry of Health and used in New Zealand poses no significant health risks, and the report also confirmed that there is compelling evidence of dental health benefits for New Zealanders.

Q. Are there any known side effects to community water fluoridation?

'One side effect of fluoride is for a portion of the population it causes minimal white mottling of the enamel... This is very rarely discernable and is definitely not the severe fluorosis that is so often pictured on websites of those opposed to fluoridation of the public water supply'

Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, Chief Science Advisor,
Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee

Q. Can you have too much fluoride?

Yes. Anything is harmful if you take too much of it, including water, iron, some vitamins or even oxygen. It is impossible to experience fluoride toxicity from the very low levels of fluoride in New Zealand water.

Q. What do other countries do?

The World Health Organization recommends boosting fluoride to optimum levels and community water fluoridation as the best method to do this. Community water fluoridation in Australia and the USA has expanded. In some countries in Europe, due to the practicalities in adding fluoride to the water supply, alternative methods are used to boost fluoride to optimal health levels such as adding fluoride to salt or milk.

**To find out more and hear from
New Zealand health professionals see:
www.fluoridefacts.govt.nz**

Further information is also available from:

Ministry of Health www.health.govt.nz and click on
Our Work and then *Preventative Health/Wellness*

Your local District Health Board's website

New Zealand Dental Association www.healthysmiles.org.nz

New Zealand Medical Association www.nzma.org.nz

National Fluoridation Information Service www.nfis.org.nz



**Community Water
Fluoridation**

**Effective.
Safe.
Affordable.**

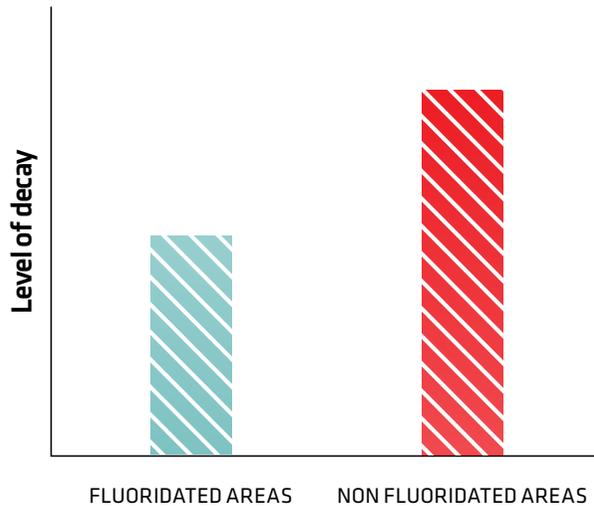


Community Water Fluoridation is an effective, safe and affordable way to prevent and reduce tooth decay for everyone.

THE FACTS

IT'S EFFECTIVE

40% less tooth decay on average for children in fluoridated areas shown by the most recent national New Zealand study



Ministry of Health's NZ Oral Health Survey, 2009.

Numerous studies have shown that children and adults living in areas with community water fluoridation have significantly less tooth decay than those living in non fluoridated areas.

IT'S SAFE

Overwhelming evidence from decades of having Community Water Fluoridation is that it is safe

'It is absolutely clear that at doses used in New Zealand to adjust the natural level to one that is consistent with beneficial effects (0.7-1.0mg/litre), there is no risk from fluoride in the water'

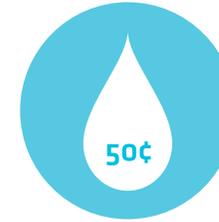
Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, Chief Science Advisor, Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee.

Organisations that endorse community water fluoridation

- Ministry of Health
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- The New Zealand Dental Association
- New Zealand Medical Association
- Public Health Association of New Zealand
- New Zealand Nurses Organisation
- Te Ao Marama – The Māori Dental Association
- Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service
- New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine
- NZ Dental and Oral Health Therapists Association
- NZ Oral Health Clinical Leadership Network Group
- NZ Society of Hospital and Community Dentistry
- Royal New Zealand Plunket Society
- Cancer Society of New Zealand
- Office of the Children's Commissioner
- The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons
- British Dental Association
- British Medical Association
- Australian Dental Association
- Australian National Health and Medical Research Council
- Department of Health, Victorian Government, Australia
- US Surgeon General
- American Dental Association
- Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (USA)
- FDI World Dental Federation

IT'S AFFORDABLE

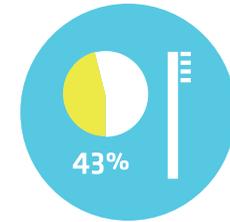
Provides benefits to everyone – cost effectively



Cost of fluoridation approx 50c per person per year



Cost of a single filling



Only 43% of children brush twice daily with the recommended strength fluoride toothpaste

'Community water fluoridation is a very cost effective way to provide the dental health benefits of fluoride to everyone in a community. If fluoridation is removed communities can expect higher levels of tooth decay with potentially higher costs both for individuals and the health system in treating that decay'

Dr Robyn Haisman-Welsh, Chief Dental Officer, Ministry of Health.