



*The facts about your  
oral health and the  
water you drink.*

# FLUORIDE & DRINKING WATER

## What is fluoride?

- Fluoride is a natural occurring ion of the periodic element, Fluorine.
- Fluoride is the 13th most common element in the earth's crust and has been present as an element since the earth formed.
- Fluoride occurs naturally in our water, food, bodies and environment.
- Fluoride is the compound used to fluoridate drinking water to promote oral health.
- Fluoride is used in toothpaste to prevent tooth decay.

*"... One of the  
**10 GREATEST  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
ACHIEVEMENTS**  
in the 20th century."*

*~ Center for  
Disease Control*

## FLUORIDE MYTHS

**MYTH:** Fluoride causes cancer.

**FACT:** Scientific studies have failed to demonstrate links between water fluoridation and an increase in any type or number of cancer cases.

**MYTH:** Water fluoridation is banned in Europe.

**FACT:** An estimated 405 million people in 60 countries worldwide enjoy the benefits of fluoridated water.

**FACT:** In some countries, the drinking water is not received from large community systems, so they do not fluoridate the water. However, these communities do supplement the natural levels of fluoride by using fluoridated salt or other fluoride sources.

**MYTH:** Water fluoridation is mass medication.

**FACT:** The addition of fluoride to drinking water is not considered mass medication. Fluoride exists naturally in the water and environment. The fluoridation of drinking water is simply adjusting the level of a natural occurring element to provide a substantial health benefit to the public.

Approximately **75%**  
of Colorado residents  
currently receive  
optimally fluoridated  
drinking water

A COST EFFECTIVE METHOD FOR

ELIMINATING  
ORAL HEALTH  
DISPARITIES

BENEFITS EVERYONE DESPITE AGE, RACE,  
SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC STATUS.

# just the FACTS

**50¢**  
PER YEAR

*approximate cost  
to fluoridate  
community  
drinking water  
per person*

REDUCES  
DENTAL  
DECAY BY  
**20%**  
to  
**40%**

**\$6,105**  
Lifetime cost  
to treat  
**ONE**  
decayed molar



each  
**\$1**  
spent

*community water  
fluoridation  
saves money!*

saves  
**\$43**

Adding to natural fluoride levels in drinking water helps prevent tooth decay and reduces oral disease by as much as 40 percent. The national Healthy People goal is to increase the percentage of citizens receiving fluoridated water from their community systems to 80% by 2020.

Fluoride works to prevent cavities in several ways... ingested fluoride is found in the saliva and plaque, and slows the deterioration of enamel from bacterial decay. It also re-mineralizes enamel that has been compromised. Bacteria thrive on sugars found in the mouth - fluoride inhibits the process that the bacteria feed on the sugars, therefore slowing the damage.

There are benefits of drinking fluoridated water for all ages. Babies benefit during the formation of their teeth, children have reduced occurrences of cavities and painful procedures, adults are able to slow down and even reverse the progress of cavities, and elderly people keep their teeth longer due to the decrease in cavities.

**1945** **OVER 75%**

Grand Rapids, Mich. is the first U.S. city to treat its water supply with fluoride.

**OF AMERICANS  
RECEIVE FLUORIDE  
THROUGH THEIR  
COMMUNITY  
SYSTEMS**

health benefits from fluoridated water have been recognized worldwide for

**70  
YEARS**

## TECHNICAL FACTS

Fluoridation additives are held to the same testing standards as other water treatment additives, the NSF/ANSI 60 standard. The National Sanitation Foundation led the development of American National Standards Institute standards for all materials and products that treat drinking water.

The certification process for the NSF/ANSI 60 standard ensures that fluoridation additives meet the highest standards of quality, safety and purity to protect public health.

All Colorado fluoridation installations in drinking water facilities are reviewed and approved by Water Quality Control Division Engineers to ensure proper design according to industry standards and specifications.

Water treatment facilities in Colorado are regulated by national standards through the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Facilities are classified by their size and complexity. They are required to employ certified operators to oversee operations. Rest assured that your drinking water is being monitored by trained professionals!

Community systems that fluoridate their water are eligible to apply for grant funding through the Grants and Loans Unit in the Water Quality Control Division.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CDPHE [www.colorado.gov/cdphe/community-water-fluoridation](http://www.colorado.gov/cdphe/community-water-fluoridation)  
The Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/fluoridation](http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation)  
NSF International (national sanitation foundation) [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)

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