What is Community Water Fluoridation?

All drinking water supplies contain some fluoride naturally. Getting the right amount of fluoride is important to prevent tooth decay. Water plant operators continuously monitor the fluoride content of drinking water in communities that fluoridate.

The most favorable concentration for fluoride in drinking water in the United States varies from 0.7 parts-per-million (ppm) in hot climates to 1.2 ppm in cold climates. For moderate climates, 1 ppm is recommended. (One ppm is the same as 1 mg/L.)

Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the fluoride content that occurs naturally in a community’s water to the best level for preventing tooth decay.

The measurable benefits of water fluoridation are:

- 18 to 40 percent less dental decay in persons of all ages.
- More children free of dental decay.
- Fewer children having permanent teeth extracted because of decay.
- More adults keeping their teeth for a lifetime.
- Prevention and reversal of early stages of tooth decay in adults.
- Older adults less likely to develop decay on the roots of their teeth.
- Lower dental bills for repairing decayed teeth.
- Less need for procedures that require anesthesia and drilling.

What are the Benefits of Community Water Fluoridation?

Hundreds of studies conducted in the United States and other countries during the past 60 years show that community water fluoridation prevents tooth decay. Because fluoride is so successful in preventing decay, it is incorporated into many dental care products, such as toothpastes and mouthrinses. Most people in non-fluoridated communities now receive some protection against cavities from fluoride in these dental care products and in food and beverages processed in fluoridated communities. Although people living in non-fluoridated communities have benefited from these other sources of fluoride, those living in fluoridated communities generally experience 18-40% less tooth decay.
It has been demonstrated that fluoride’s action in preventing tooth decay provides a benefit to both children and adults throughout their lives.

**Benefits of fluoridation include:**

- **Prevents cavities**
- **Prevents pain**
- **Saves money**

Community water fluoridation is effective, safe, inexpensive, and practical. The average cost of fluoridation is about .62 cents per person a year. This is one of the best bargains in health today!

The entire community benefits from community water fluoridation, regardless of a person’s age, income, level of education, or ability to get dental care. Everyone benefits when they drink fluoridated water and consume foods and beverages prepared with it.

The American Association of Public Health Dentistry urges you to support the adoption or continuation of community water fluoridation for your community. Find out if your community is fluoridated. If it isn’t, ask your political leaders and local health officials why not. You have a right to the improved dental health that comes from living in a fluoridated community!

**In summary, community water fluoridation is the most efficient way to prevent tooth decay. The following key facts about fluoridation summarize why this is so.**

- Fluoridation is the least expensive and most effective way to reduce tooth decay.
- Fluoridation benefits children and adults when they drink fluoridated water and consume foods and beverages prepared with it.
- Fluoridation is safe.
- Fluoridation provides benefits that continue for a lifetime.
- Fluoridation reduces the need for dental treatment and its costs.