

## What is dental fluorosis?

Dental fluorosis is a change in the appearance of teeth and is caused when higher than optimal amounts of fluoride are ingested while teeth are forming under the gums. Dental fluorosis is a cosmetic problem with no known health effects.

## When ingested, where does fluoride go?

Much is excreted; almost all of the fluoride retained in the body is found in the bones and teeth. Fluoride helps to prevent dental decay when absorbed into the teeth.

## Do adults benefit from fluoridation?

Fluoridation plays a protective role against dental decay throughout life. Fluoride benefits both children and adults.

## Why we recommend fluoridation!

Health professionals have increasingly become aware of the benefits of water fluoridation. Fluoridating community drinking water is safe, economical, and by far the single most effective way of preventing tooth decay.

## FLUORIDE Provides Lifetime Benefits

- \* Fewer cavities
- \* Fewer lost teeth
- \* Fewer partial dentures
- \* Reduces dental care costs
- \* Reduces root surface decay
- \* Reduced tooth decay by 40%
- \* Easiest method to prevent tooth decay
- \* Very inexpensive

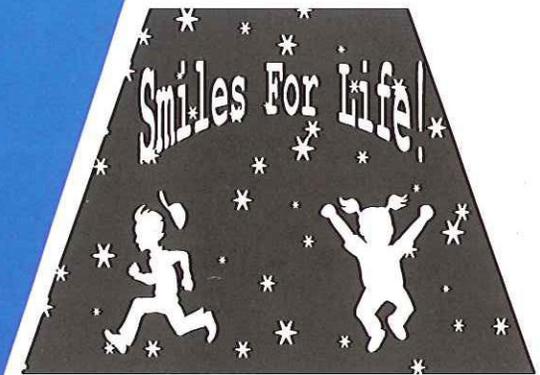
For more information, contact

**MCDH**

McHenry County Department of Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
2200 N Seminary Ave  
Woodstock, Illinois 60098  
(815) 334-4585

# FLUORIDE

## Nature's Way to Prevent Tooth Decay!



## What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a mineral your body needs for optimum growth and health. Fluoride makes teeth and bones strong. It is present in some degree in water, soil, plants and many foods.

## What is water fluoridation?

Even though fluoride is found naturally in water, the amount is usually too low to provide the best protection from decay. Fluoridation is the process of adjusting the natural level of fluoride in the water supply to the optimal amount necessary for protection against tooth decay. This amount is from 0.9 to 1.2 parts fluoride per million parts of water.

## How does fluoride work?

Fluoride deposits itself onto the outer part of the tooth and makes the tooth stronger and better able to fight decay. Recent findings also indicate that fluoride may interfere with the growth of bacteria on the teeth. It also helps repair the earliest stages of tooth decay, those visible only under the microscope.



## Who needs fluoride?

Water fluoridation benefits people of all ages. Current research indicates the valuable effects of fluoride are predominately after the teeth have erupted and is most effective when the teeth are "bathed" in frequent, low concentrations of fluoride in drinking water.

## Is fluoridation safe?

YES! Since 1940, hundreds of scientific studies have shown that the use of fluoride at recommended levels has no harmful effects. Fluoridation of community water supplies is a valuable public health measure.

## What are the benefits of water fluoridation?

Water fluoridation is an inexpensive and effective way to improve dental health. Research indicates that if people drink optimally fluoridated water from birth:

- Children have up to 65% fewer cavities and 90% fewer tooth extractions.
- More than 20% of teenagers will still be cavity free.
- Adults have 40 to 50% fewer decayed, missing or filled teeth.

## What if I have a private water well?

People living with private water wells should have their water tested for fluoride. If test results are low, consider buying bottled water that is fluoridated. Studies have shown that fluoride is most effective when consumed in small doses, but on a daily basis. Consult with your dentist or doctor regarding your family's fluoride needs.

## Is all bottled water the same?

The majority of bottled water on the market does not contain optimal levels of fluoride. People who drink bottled water as their primary source of water could be missing the decay preventive effects of fluoridated water. When having bottled water delivered to your home, be sure to request fluoridated water.

## Can well water be too high in fluoride?

Although uncommon, there are regions (even in McHenry County) where the water is naturally too high in fluoride. Community supplies adjust the water for optimum fluoride levels. Have your water tested for fluoride if you are on a private well.