

Vacationland District Dental Society Supports Community Water Fluoridation

The Boyne City-area members of the Michigan Dental Association believe it is crucial for Boyne City to continue fluoridating its public water supply. Fluoridation is considered one of the Top 10 public health initiatives of the past century, and it's important not to take away this effective public service.

Here are some key facts:

Fluoridation is effective – and we have more than 65 years of evidence to back that up.

Fluoride occurs naturally in groundwater, but community fluoridation was launched in 1945 because scientists found that children in communities with a naturally-occurring, optimal concentration of fluoride in the water had 50 to 60 percent less tooth decay. They wanted all children to get that benefit, including those living in communities with fluoride-deficient water.

Even today, when we get fluoride from other sources such as toothpaste, water fluoridation continues to be effective in preventing tooth decay by 25 percent. We need look no further than to our own families for proof of that.

It's important to remember that our most vulnerable citizens suffer when communities stop fluoridation. People who cannot afford to visit the dentist regularly, or to receive fluoride supplements, stop receiving optimum amounts when fluoride is removed from the water. That means economically disadvantaged citizens then have another strike against them – disproportionately high rates of tooth decay – simply because they live in the wrong place. We do not want our community to be the “wrong place” for people to live.

Fluoridation is the most efficient way to prevent tooth decay, which is the most common chronic childhood disease. Tooth decay is five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever in children. For children, early tooth loss caused by tooth decay can result in failure to thrive, impaired speech development, and absence from school. Without fluoridation, there would be many more than the estimated 51 million school hours lost per year in this country because of dental-related illness.

Fluoridation benefits adults, too. People in the U.S are living longer and retaining more of their natural teeth than ever before thanks in part to fluoridation.

Fluoridation is safe – and again we have more than 65 years of research to back that up.

The facts just don't support allegations of toxicity and health-related problems related to fluoridation.

Of the hundreds of credible scientific studies on fluoridation, none has shown health problems associated with the consumption of optimally fluoridated water. One potential cosmetic effect has been found – the harmless streaking of tooth enamel, but this has no known health consequences and is not readily apparent to the casual observer.

Fluoridation is economical. Fluoridation has substantial, lifelong decay preventive benefits and is a highly economical means of preventing tooth decay, regardless of an individual's socioeconomic status. The lifetime cost per person to fluoridate a water system is less than the cost of one dental filling. With rising health care costs, fluoridation remains a preventive measure that provides benefit at minimal cost – which impacts both individuals and taxpayers who fund public health programs.

Fluoridation has been slammed by “junk science” – even with more than 65 years of research and experience to disprove that faulty thinking.

It is important to distinguish junk science from legitimate scientific research. Reputable science is based on the scientific method of testing hypotheses in ways that can be reproduced and verified by others. Junk science offers simplistic answers to complex questions and cannot be substantiated.

You may hear wild allegations that fluoridation causes cancer, AIDS, Down Syndrome, Alzheimer's disease, hip fracture, heart and kidney disease, and even lower IQs in children. These claims have not been proven by credible scientific evidence and indeed, generally accepted science says just the opposite – fluoridation improves overall health.

Decision makers must be responsible to the citizens and must demand proof and weigh these wild claims against demonstrated science.

No court of last resort has ever determined fluoridation to be unlawful. Moreover, fluoridation has never been found to be an unconstitutional invasion of religious freedom or other individual rights guaranteed by the First, Fifth or Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. constitution.

As Former U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona said, “... Fluoridation is the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health over a lifetime, for both children and adults ... Policymakers, community leaders, private industry, health professionals, the media, and the public should affirm that oral health is essential to general health and well-being and take action to make ourselves, our families, and our communities healthier.”

When presented with an opportunity to provide people with a safe, demonstrated and cost-effective health care program that benefits everyone, there can be no doubt why states and communities across the nation have chosen to provide their citizens with the benefits of community water fluoridation. It works, it's safe, and it's economical.

Our city must not turn a blind eye to the overwhelming facts that support water fluoridation.

Sincerely,



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