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WHY FLUORIDATE AN ENTIRE WATER SUPPLY WHEN THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE WATER IS NOT USED FOR DRINKING?

Adding fluoride to a whole water supply is the most effective way of protecting whole communities from tooth decay.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF MY WATER SUPPLY IS GOING TO BE FLUORIDATED?

Contact your local Strategic Health Authority (SHA) (www.nhs.uk) to ask if they have any plans to fluoridate the water. The SHA are required to inform the public about their intentions to fluoridate and must undertake a public consultation before they do so.

FURTHER INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

If you want to find out about water fluoridation or any of the other fluoride issues mentioned in this leaflet then contact NFIC on:

Email: info@fluorideinformation.com

Web: www.fluorideinformation.com

Tel: 0161 275 8948

Published by the National Fluoride Information Centre (NFIC). NFIC is an academically independent unit which provides objective information on all aspects of fluoridation.

Based at The University of Manchester, all information is derived from scientific literature and is reviewed by independent scientific experts.

In addition, NFIC has also been charged with the task of invigorating fluoride research. This action is undertaken with colleagues at the National Oral Health Unit. (www.ohu.ac.uk).

All the information contained in this leaflet is based on current and valid scientific research.



Water Fluoridation *and You*

Fluoride:

Reduces the loss of minerals from the enamel surface of the tooth and helps repair damaged tooth enamel.

WHAT IS FLUORIDE?

Fluoride is a substance which occurs naturally in most water supplies. Fluoride reduces tooth decay in adults and children.

HOW DOES FLUORIDE HELP REDUCE TOOTH DECAY?

Fluoride reduces the loss of minerals from the enamel surface of the tooth and helps to repair damaged tooth enamel.

HOW IS FLUORIDE USED?

Fluoride is used in a number of different ways to help protect teeth. It can be added to milk, salt, toothpaste and to public water supplies. Your dentist can also apply fluoride to your teeth using special gels and varnishes.

WHAT IS WATER FLUORIDATION?

Water fluoridation is an adjustment in the amount of fluoride in the water supply to strengthen the teeth against decay.

WHY FLUORIDATE WATER?

Five and a half million people in England drink artificially fluoridated water. In these areas the children have among the lowest levels of tooth decay in the country.

Recent independent research at the University of York has confirmed the benefits of fluoridation. Fluoridation works best in large towns with a simple water supply and where the children have a high amount of dental decay. The people living in Birmingham and Newcastle have been drinking fluoridated water for more than 30 years.

IS IT SAFE?

Over 350 million people worldwide drink artificially fluoridated water, some for over 60 years. Another 100 million drink water that naturally contains fluoride at about the right level. There is no evidence of ill effects on general health of these people.

ARE THERE ANY HEALTH RISKS?

Some young children who receive too much fluoride whilst their teeth are still forming may develop white spots on their teeth. This is called 'Dental Fluorosis'. You can reduce this risk by supervising their brushing to ensure that they don't regularly swallow toothpaste.

COULD I BE ALLERGIC TO FLUORIDE?

Small amounts of fluoride are found in some food and drinks. There is no reliable evidence of allergy to fluoride ever occurring.

WHAT ARE THE DENTAL BENEFITS FOR ADULTS?

Adults who have drunk fluoridated water all their lives have much less dental decay. However it will be less for adults who started drinking fluoridated water later in life.

DO OLDER ADULTS BENEFIT TOO?

Yes. There is also a benefit for older adults who may suffer from decayed roots due to their gums shrinking.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF MY TAP WATER IS FLUORIDATED?

You can ask your dentist, your Primary Care Trust (www.nhs.uk), water supply company or your local pharmacist.

CAN I BUY A WATER FILTER TO REMOVE FLUORIDE FROM MY WATER?

Yes. Water filters will remove some of the fluoride but not all of it, as low levels of fluoride occur naturally in most water supplies.

DO I STILL NEED TO USE FLUORIDE TOOTH PASTE IF I DRINK FLUORIDATED WATER?

Yes. Research shows that people who drink fluoridated water and also use fluoridated toothpaste have even less decay.

IS DRINKING FLUORIDATED WATER HARMFUL TO PREGNANT WOMEN?

No. There is no evidence that drinking fluoridated water during pregnancy has harmful effects on the mother or unborn child.

WILL ADDING FLUORIDE AFFECT THE QUALITY OF MY DRINKING WATER?

No. The recommended amount is one part of fluoride to every million parts of water. As this is such a small amount, it makes no difference to the look, taste or smell of the water.