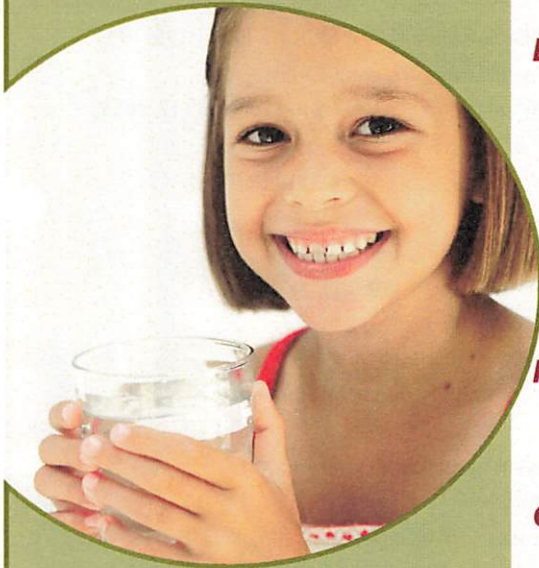


Community Water Fluoridation



Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic diseases among American children. One of four children living below the federal poverty level experience untreated tooth decay.¹



Tooth decay and its complications are preventable.²

Community water fluoridation (CWF) is “the controlled addition of a fluoride compound to a public water supply to achieve a concentration optimal for dental caries prevention.”¹²

Safe

- The safety and benefits of fluoride are well documented and have been reviewed comprehensively by several scientific and public health organizations.³⁻⁵
- No convincing scientific evidence has been found linking community water fluoridation (CWF) with any potential adverse health effect or systemic disorder such as an increased risk for cancer, Down syndrome, heart disease, osteoporosis and bone fracture, immune disorders, low intelligence, renal disorders, Alzheimer’s disease, or allergic reactions.^{4,6}
- Documented risks of CWF are limited to dental fluorosis, a change in dental enamel that is primarily cosmetic in its most common form. In the United States today, most dental fluorosis is of the mildest form, with no effect on how teeth look or function.⁷

Effective

- The US Community Preventive Services Task Force issued a strong recommendation in 2001 and again in 2013 for CWF for the prevention and control of tooth decay.^{6,8}
- Water fluoridation prevents tooth decay by providing frequent and consistent contact with low levels of fluoride, ultimately reducing tooth decay by about 25% in children and adults.⁹⁻¹²
- Schoolchildren living in fluoridated communities on average have 2.25 fewer decayed teeth compared with similar children not living in fluoridated communities.⁶

Reduce Disparities

- CWF has been identified as the most cost-effective method of delivering fluoride to all members of the community regardless of age, educational attainment, or income level.^{13,14}

Cost-Saving

- By preventing tooth decay, CWF has been shown to save money, both for families and the health care system.^{11,15}
- The return on investment for CWF varies with size of the community, increasing as the community size increases. CWF is cost-saving—even for small communities.^{15,16}

Public Health Achievement

- Because of its contribution to the dramatic decline in tooth decay over the past 70 years, CDC named CWF 1 of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.¹³
- In 2012, more than 210 million people, or nearly 75% of the U.S. population served by public water supplies, drank water with optimal fluoride levels to prevent tooth decay.¹⁷

International Fluoride Use

- Nearly all developed countries practice fluoridation, just not always through water. Instead, salt is often used as the primary way of providing fluoride to the public.¹⁸
- The World Health Organization supports fluoridation of water, salt, and milk as a way to reduce dental decay.^{19,20}

References

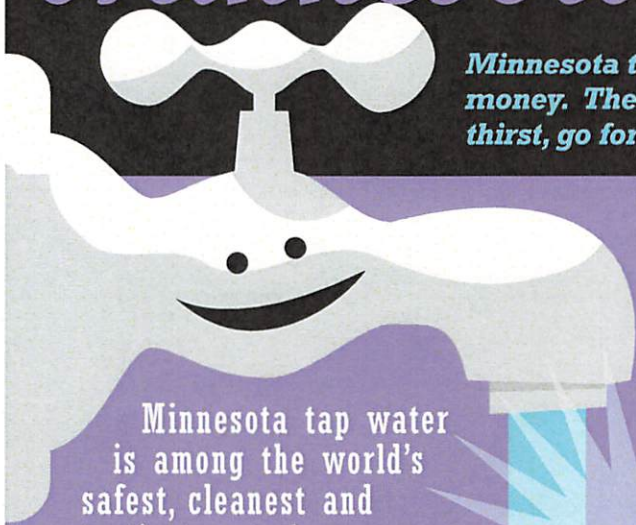
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DRINK IT UP

SAFE ~ REFRESHING ~ HEALTHY

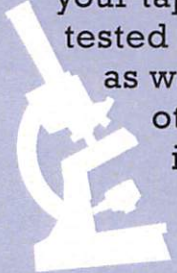
Minnesota Tap Water

Minnesota tap water is safe, prevents cavities, and saves money. The next time you reach for something to quench your thirst, go for that Minnesota tap water and DRINK IT UP!



Minnesota tap water is among the world's safest, cleanest and tastiest water!

The water you get from your tap has been tested as thoroughly as water from any other source, including bottled water.



Minnesota tap water is fluoridated to help protect teeth from cavities.



Tap water costs less than one penny a gallon compared to

bottled water which costs about **1,000** times more per gallon.

1¢

Drinking fluoridated tap water saves money by preventing cavities: the cost for treating a decayed molar over a person's lifetime is

\$6,105.

Swishing tap water in your mouth after eating helps "wash" your teeth and reduces the acid that causes cavities.



Sugar feeds the bacteria in your mouth, creating acid that can cause cavities.

Drinking tap water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages helps **prevent cavities.**



Oral Health Program

85 E. 7th Place, Suite 220, Saint Paul, MN 55101
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Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles

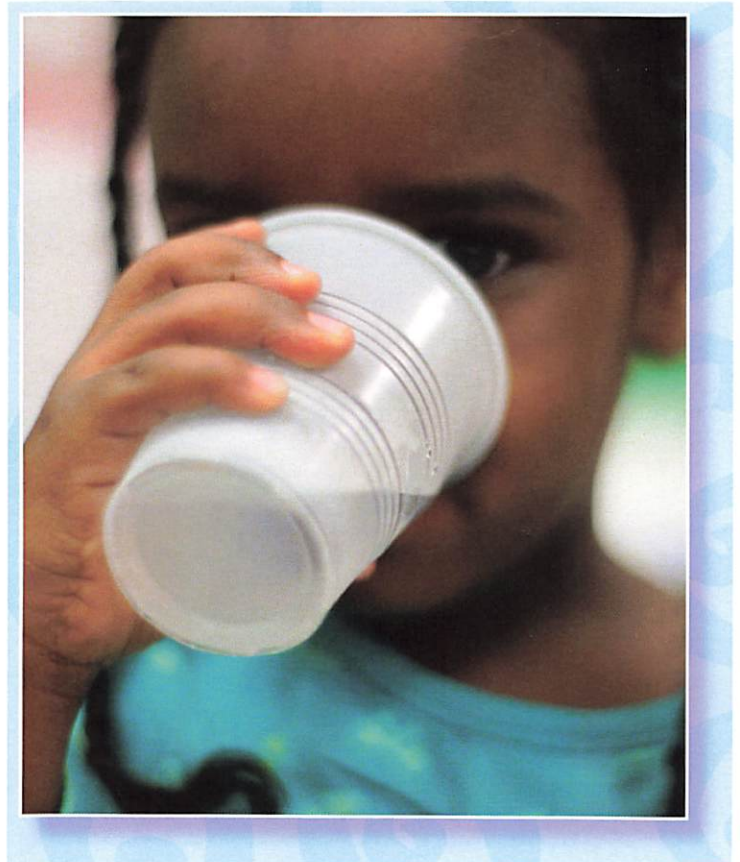


Getting Fluoride for Your Child

Fluoride is found in nature in soil, plants, and water. Fluoride is safe. Drinking tap (faucet) water with fluoride, brushing with fluoride toothpaste, and having a health professional apply fluoride varnish to the teeth are important ways to make teeth strong and prevent tooth decay.



School readiness begins with health!



Fluoride in Water

- Since most water doesn't have enough natural fluoride to prevent tooth decay, many communities add fluoride to their water supply (tap water) used for drinking and cooking.
- Give your child tap water with fluoride. If you are not sure if your water has enough fluoride, ask your child's dental clinic for help in finding out.
- Some bottled waters contain fluoride, and some do not. Check with the bottled water's manufacturer to ask about the fluoride content of a particular brand.
- If your tap water does not have enough fluoride, ask your dental or medical clinic if your child needs fluoride drops or tablets.

Fluoride Toothpaste

- Brush your child's teeth after breakfast and before bed once the first tooth begins to show.
- Use a child-sized toothbrush with soft bristles and fluoride toothpaste.
- See *Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles: Brushing Your Child's Teeth* for more information.

Fluoride Varnish

- Fluoride varnish is painted on a child's teeth to prevent or reduce cavities.
- It is not permanent but keeps fluoride on the teeth for several hours.
- Fluoride varnish has a pleasant taste and is well tolerated by children.



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This handout was prepared by the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness under cooperative agreement #9OHC0013 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start.

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