

Vermont Department of Health Statement on Community Water Fluoridation

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in soil, water, and food. At the right concentration, fluoride benefits the public by preventing tooth decay. **Community water fluoridation is the adjustment of the amount of natural fluoride in a water system to a level that is just the right amount to prevent tooth decay safely – 0.7 mg/L.** The beneficial effects of fluoride are also observed in communities with naturally occurring fluoride around the optimal 0.7 mg/L level.

The Health Department supports community water fluoridation at levels no higher than those recommended in [CDC guidance](#), as a safe and effective strategy to prevent dental decay and promote dental health. Too many people in Vermont suffer from poor dental health and [have difficulty accessing dental care](#). This is a serious problem because oral health is connected to overall health. Community water fluoridation provides a preventive dental benefit to everyone in a community regardless of their ability to access dental care.

The Health Department regularly monitors science and studies related to fluoride. Organizations including the [American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) have reaffirmed their support of community water fluoridation as an important strategy to prevent dental decay.

The decision to fluoridate is made at the community level. There are 29 fluoridated water systems in Vermont, and 31 water systems buy water from fluoridated systems. About 57% of people in Vermont who get their water from a public water system benefit from fluoridated water. Water operators working in the fluoridated systems test the water daily to make sure it contains the right amount of fluoride. The Health Department supports these systems with supplies and equipment.

There are many steps communities can take – whether they fluoridate or not – to promote dental health:

- Engage in an educational campaign to promote taking care of teeth at home, emphasizing the importance of brushing and flossing, eating a healthy diet and avoiding sugary drinks
- Promote integration between local medical and dental health care practices (e.g., offer [silver diamine fluoride](#) and [fluoride varnish](#) applications as part of primary medical care)
- Participate in the [802 Smiles Network](#), which brings dental services to children in schools





- Offer dental services in public health settings for people who may have difficulty accessing dental care in a dental practice (e.g., nursing homes, congregate meal sites)

For information about community water fluoridation, visit the [American Academy of Pediatrics' Campaign for Dental Health](#) or [American Dental Association](#) websites.

For information about fluoride levels in public water systems, visit the [CDC's My Water's Fluoride](#) website.

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