



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Vermont Experts to Evaluate New Fluoride Recommendations

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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health will work together with community drinking water regulators to evaluate the adoption of new national recommendations for fluoridating drinking water.

On Friday, Jan. 7, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that both federal agencies are recommending lower levels of fluoride in drinking water. Specifically, HHS is recommending that the optimal level of fluoride for community drinking water supplies be set at .7 milligrams per liter of water – down from a range of .7 to 1.2 milligrams.

This updated recommendation is based on recent EPA and HHS scientific assessments to balance the benefits of preventing tooth decay while limiting any unwanted health effects from too much fluoride.

“This is good news,” said Patrick Rowe, DDS, MPH, director of oral health at the Vermont Department of Health. “After more than 60 years of documented success in reducing dental decay through community water fluoridation, advances in fluoride products and greater access to oral health care, it just makes sense to review and adjust fluoridation recommendations based on the latest scientific data.”

In Vermont, nearly 60 percent of the population is served by public drinking water supplies that are fluoridated. This represents about 310,000 people, or about half the state’s population. Although fluoride exists naturally in nearly all water sources, amounts can vary widely. Approximately 92,000 Vermonters get their water from wells. Homeowners with drinking water wells are advised to have their water tested to find out the levels of fluoride in their drinking water.

Fluoridation is considered to be one of the 10 top public health achievements of the 20th century. Every \$1 spent on community water fluoridation saves an estimated \$38 in unnecessary costs for dental treatments.

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