



The Honorable John Heinz  
United States Senator  
1306 Liberty Center  
1001 Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222

OCT. 17 1990

Dear Senator Heinz:

This is in reply to your letter of September 6, 1990, to Mr. Richard J. Davis, on behalf of Ms. Bernice O. Berg, Verona, Pennsylvania, concerning fluorine being listed as an essential nutrient.

The United States Recommended Daily Allowances (U.S. RDA) are established for vitamins and minerals essential in human nutrition. These nutrients and their recommended levels have been derived by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from the "Recommended Dietary Allowances" published by the Food and Nutrition Board, National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council (NAS/NRC) and are subject to amendment from time to time by the NAS/NRC as more information on human nutrition becomes available.

The National Research Council (10th Edition 1989) notes that the status of fluorine, as an essential nutrient, has been debated. Several studies in rodents have provided conflicting results. These contradictory results did not justify a classification of fluorine as an essential element, according to accepted standards. Nonetheless, because of its valuable effects on dental health, fluorine is a beneficial element for humans.

In summary, FDA does not list fluorine as an essential nutrient. The National Research Council, the source from which FDA received data on essential nutrients, indicated that there was no justification to classify fluorine as an essential nutrient.

We hope this information is sufficient. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,

Hugh C. Cannon  
Associate Commissioner  
for Legislative Affairs

Enclosure  
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cc: Richard J. Davis  
Regional Food and Drug Director  
Mid-Atlantic Region