

MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH

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*A. copy answering to your
inquiry of 18 September 1999*

Truly yours

Leena Hiisvirta

Acknowledged 23.10.99

Mr Elroy Belbeck, President
Fluoride-Free Association
Box 922
Owen Sound, ON
N4K 6H6
CANADA

Your inquiry concerning drinking water fluoridation

Dear Mr Belbeck

With reference to your letter of 2 January 1996 to the Embassy of the Republic of Finland I will give a brief description of the status of drinking water fluoridation in Finland.

Artificial fluoridation of drinking-water supplies has been practiced in Finland only in one town, Kuopio, situated in eastern Finland and with a population of about 80 000 people (1,6 % of the Finnish population). Fluoridation started in 1959 and finished in 1992 as a result of the resistance of local population. The most usual grounds for the resistance presented in this context were an individual's right to drinking water without additional chemicals used for the medication of limited population groups. A concept of 'force-feeding' was also mentioned.

Drinking water fluoridation is not prohibited in Finland but no municipalities have turned out to be willing to practice it. Water suppliers, naturally, have always been against dosing of fluoride chemicals into water.

The benefits of drinking water fluoridation are also questionable in today's situation in Finland. We have a very advanced public dental care system starting from infancy and going on through school years, and additional fluoride can be given in these controlled conditions.

Sincerely yours

Leena Hiisvirta
Chief Engineer