



WATER FLUORIDATION IS THE PRACTICE OF ADDING INDUSTRIAL-GRADE FLUORIDE CHEMICALS TO WATER FOR THE PURPOSE OF PREVENTING TOOTH DECAY. ONE OF THE LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THIS PRACTICE IS THAT THE UNITED STATES, WHICH FLUORIDATES OVER 70% OF ITS WATER SUPPLIES, HAS MORE PEOPLE DRINKING FLUORIDATED WATER THAN THE REST OF THE WORLD COMBINED. MOST DEVELOPED NATIONS, INCLUDING ALL OF JAPAN AND 97% OF WESTERN EUROPE, DO NOT FLUORIDATE THEIR WATER.

In the United States, the Oral Health Division of the Centers Disease Control (CDC) hails fluoridation as one of the “top ten public health achievements of the 20th century.” However, comprehensive data from the World Health Organization reveals that there is no discernible difference in tooth decay between the minority of western nations that fluoridate water, and the majority that do not. In fact, the tooth decay rates in many non-fluoridated countries are now lower than the tooth decay rates in fluoridated ones.

As is becoming increasingly clear, fluoridating water supplies is an outdated, unnecessary, and dangerous relic from a 1950s public health culture that viewed mass distribution of chemicals much differently than scientists do today.

Communities Are Starting to Get the Message

In recent years, communities throughout the United States and Canada have started to reassess the conventional wisdom of fluoridating their water. Many of these communities, including over 50 since 2010, are reaching the obvious conclusion: when stripped of its endorsements, well-meaning intentions, and PR-praise, fluoridation simply makes no sense.

Europe reached this conclusion a long time ago. It is now time for the U.S. and other English-speaking nations to follow suit.



3 REASONS TO END WATER FLUORIDATION

1) FLUORIDATION IS AN OUTDATED FORM OF MASS MEDICATION

Unlike all other water treatment processes, fluoridation does not treat the water itself, but the person consuming it. The Food & Drug Administration accepts that fluoride is a drug, not a nutrient, when used to prevent disease. By definition, therefore, fluoridating water is a form of mass medication. This is why most western European nations have rejected the practice—because, in their view, the public water supply is not an appropriate place to be adding drugs, particularly when fluoride is readily available for individual use in the form of toothpaste.

2) FLUORIDATION IS UNNECESSARY AND INEFFECTIVE

The most obvious reason to end fluoridation is that it is now known that fluoride's main benefit comes from topical contact with the teeth, not from ingestion. Even the CDC's Oral Health Division now acknowledges this. There is simply no need, therefore, to swallow fluoride, whether in the water, toothpaste, or any other form. Further, despite early claims that fluoridated water would reduce cavities by 65%, modern large-scale studies show no consistent or meaningful difference in the cavity rates of fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas.

3) FLUORIDATION IS NOT A SAFE PRACTICE

First, there is no dispute that fluoridation is causing millions of children to develop dental fluorosis, a discoloration of the teeth that is caused by excessive fluoride intake. Scientists from the Centers for Disease Control have even acknowledged that fluoridation is causing “cosmetically objectionable” fluorosis on children's front teeth—an effect that can cause embarrassment and distress at a time of life when physical appearance is the single most important predictor of self-esteem.

Second, it is known that fluoridated water caused severe bone disease in dialysis patients up until the late 1970s (prior to dialysis units filtering fluoride). While dialysis units now filter out the fluoride, research shows that current fluoride exposures are still resulting in dangerously high bone fluoride levels in dialysis patients and patients with other advanced forms of kidney disease. It is unethical to compromise the health of some members in a population to obtain a purported benefit for another — particularly in the absence of these vulnerable members' knowing consent.

And, finally, a growing body of evidence reasonably indicates that fluoridated water, in addition to other sources of daily fluoride exposure, can cause or contribute to a range of serious effects, including arthritis, damage to the developing brain, reduced thyroid function, and possibly osteosarcoma (bone cancer) in adolescent males.