

Michigan Department of Community Health Oral Health Program

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Community Water Fluoridation Fact Sheet

What is Community Water Fluoridation?

- Community water fluoridation is the adjustment of the *natural level* of the fluoride in the drinking water system to the level recommended for optimum dental health.
- It is a safe, inexpensive, and effective way to prevent tooth decay in children and adults.

What is Fluoride?

- Fluoride is a naturally occurring compound derived from the element fluorine.
- Small amounts of fluoride are present in all water sources.

How does Community Water Fluoridation benefit my Family?

- Fluoride benefits both children and adults by strengthening and repairing tooth enamel
- Community water fluoridation accounts for a reduction in the frequency and severity of tooth decay
- Community water fluoridation decreases the need for fillings and extractions
- Reduces pain and suffering associated with tooth decay
- Community water fluoridation creates an elevation in self-esteem with improved oral function and appearance.

Is Community Water Fluoridation Safe?

- Community water fluoridation has proven to be safe through both practical experience and research.
- During the past 40 years, over 4000 studies have measured and confirmed the safety of fluoride. Community water fluoridation has been studied more thoroughly than any other public health measure.
- Community fluoridated water regulations maintain fluoride between .7 and 1.2 parts per million; well below the EPA guidelines and far below the levels required for the adverse effects of permanent tooth staining.

What does it cost the Community to Fluoridate the Water?

- The median cost of community-based fluoridation is about 72 cents per person per year. The cost varies by the size of the community population, the larger the community the less expensive.
- The cost of community water fluoridation per person is less than having one cavity treated over a person's lifetime.
- A CDC study estimated that every \$1 invested in community water fluoridation saved \$50 in avoided costs for dental treatment.