

Water Fluoridation Basics

The mineral fluoride occurs naturally on earth and is released from rocks into the soil, water, and air. All water contains some fluoride. Usually, the fluoride level in water is not enough to prevent tooth decay; however, some groundwater and natural springs can have naturally high levels of fluoride.

Fluoride has been proven to protect teeth from decay. Bacteria in the mouth produce acid when a person eats sugary foods. This acid eats away minerals from the tooth's surface, making the tooth weaker and increasing the chance of developing cavities. Fluoride helps to rebuild and strengthen the tooth's surface, or enamel. Water fluoridation prevents tooth decay by providing frequent and consistent contact with low levels of fluoride. By keeping the tooth strong and solid, fluoride stops cavities from forming and can even rebuild the tooth's surface.

Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the amount of fluoride in drinking water to a level recommended for preventing tooth decay.

Although [other fluoride-containing products](#), such as toothpaste, mouth rinses, and dietary supplements are available and contribute to the prevention and control of tooth decay, community water fluoridation has been identified as the most cost-effective method of delivering fluoride to all, reducing tooth decay by 25% in adults and children.¹

Fluoride benefits adults and children throughout their lives. For children younger than age 8, fluoride helps strengthen the adult (permanent) teeth that are developing under the gums. For adults, drinking water with fluoride supports tooth enamel, keeping teeth strong and healthy. The health benefits of fluoride include having:

- Fewer cavities.
- Less severe cavities.
- Less need for fillings and removing teeth.
- Less pain and suffering because of tooth decay.

Source: CDC Fluoridation Website <https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/basics/index.htm>