

Water Fluoridation in Connecticut

What is water fluoridation?

Fluoride is a natural mineral that is shown to protect against tooth decay. Almost all water has some naturally occurring fluoride, but usually not enough to prevent tooth decay. The amount of fluoride in many drinking water supplies is changed to an optimal level to help reduce tooth decay and promote good oral health. This practice is known as water fluoridation. Hundreds of research studies have shown that water fluoridation is safe, effective and the best way to improve oral health in a community. Given the large decrease in tooth decay during the past 60 years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) named water fluoridation one of Ten Great Public Health Achievements of the 20th Century.

(<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056796.htm>).

What are the health benefits of adding fluoride to drinking water?

The CDC highlighted the following as how communities benefit from drinking water fluoridation:

1. Although dental caries (tooth decay/cavities) can be prevented, it remains the most common chronic disease of children aged 5 to 17 years. In the U.S., tooth decay affects 1 out of 4 elementary school children, 2 out of 3 adolescents, and 9 out of 10 adults. Fluoride works by stopping or even reversing the tooth decay process. It keeps tooth enamel strong and solid, and helps to re-mineralize tooth surfaces. Also, it prevents cavities from continuing to form.
2. Both children and adults benefit from water fluoridation. Studies have shown that people in communities with fluoridated water have 20% to 40% less tooth decay than those in communities without fluoridated water.
3. The cost to fluoridate water for the lifetime of one person is less than the cost to treat one cavity.
4. Every dollar spent on fluoridation saves \$38 in avoided dental bills.
5. CDC monitors the progress of the nation and individual states toward meeting the [Healthy People 2030 objective](#) on community water fluoridation—that 77.1% of people served by community water systems will receive water that has the optimum level of fluoride recommended for preventing tooth decay.

6. In 2020, 72.7% of the US population on community water systems, or 209,145,650 people, had access to fluoridated water. Overall, an estimated **2.5 million people (90.4%)** in Connecticut receive optimally fluoridated drinking water from a public water system.

What are the requirements for water fluoridation in Connecticut?

Fluoridation became a law (CGS Sec. 19a-38) in Connecticut on May 18, 1965, initiated by Public Act 156. Public Water Systems (PWSs) serving 50,000 or more were required to begin fluoridation on January 1, 1967, and PWSs serving 20,000 to 49,999 people were required to begin fluoridation on October 1, 1967.

Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 19a-38 states that **Community Public Water Systems (PWS)** that serve over 20,000 people must adjust the fluoride level of the drinking water so as to maintain an average monthly fluoride content that is not more or less than 0.15 mg/l different than the United States Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) most recent recommendation for optimal fluoride levels in drinking water to prevent tooth decay.

- As of April 2015, the HHS' **Optimal Fluoridation Level is at 0.7 mg/l**

Which public water systems are currently fluoridated in Connecticut?

A list of municipalities in Connecticut with communities receiving fluoridated drinking water is available on the Connecticut Department of Public Drinking Water Section's website at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/drinking_water/pdf/fluorlistpdf.pdf.

Where can I find more information on water fluoridation?

More resources of information about fluoride in drinking water:

- CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/index.html>
- American Dental Association - <https://www.ada.org/en>

Who should I contact at CTDPH if I need more information?

For questions on water fluoridation, please contact Carissa Madonna of the CT DPH – [Drinking Water Section](#). Email: carissa.madonna@ct.gov

For questions on the health benefits on fluoride, please contact Chantelle Archer of the CT DPH - [Office of Oral Health \(ct.gov\)](#). Email: chantelle.archer@ct.gov