

Water Fluoridation in Pinellas County

On August 26, 2003, after weeks of careful review and with strong support from Pinellas County water customers, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners approved the addition of fluoride to the Pinellas County water system.

At present, Pinellas County Utilities is the largest water supplier in the eastern United States whose community does not benefit from fluoridated tap water. By June 2004, in an effort to significantly reduce the occurrences of tooth decay in our community, Pinellas County will join 43 of the 50 largest cities in the U.S. by introducing water fluoridation to the Pinellas County Utilities water system.



FLUORIDATION FACTS

- ▶ Water fluoridation has played an important role in the reduction of tooth decay (40-70%) in children and of tooth loss (40-60%) in adults.
- ▶ Water fluoridation is a safe and effective community health measure that benefits both children and adults.
- ▶ It is the success of water fluoridation, first used in 1945 in a U.S. public water supply, that led to the development and wide use of fluoride-containing products such as toothpaste, mouth rinse, and dietary supplements.
- ▶ Most large cities in the United States fluoridate their drinking water supplies including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.
- ▶ Water fluoridation is the least expensive and most effective way to reduce tooth decay and reduce the need for dental treatment and its costs.
- ▶ Water fluoridation is listed by the CDC and the Surgeon General as one of the top ten greatest public health achievements of the 20th century.

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FLUORIDATED WATER

in Pinellas County

What's In It For You



▶ ▶ ▶ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

▶ Is water fluoridation safe?



As with other nutrients, fluoride is safe and effective when used and consumed properly. More than 50 years of evidence from 162 million Americans and nearly 60 other countries supports the effectiveness of fluoridated water and its ability to inhibit, reduce, or even reverse the onset and development of tooth decay. Through continuous research, drinking optimally fluoridated water has been scientifically proven to be safe (not toxic) and effective.

▶ What level of fluoride will be added?

Natural fluoride levels in Pinellas County water currently range from an average of 0.15-0.25 parts per million (ppm)*. Water fluoridation will adjust the natural fluoride concentration in Pinellas County's drinking water to 0.8 ppm, a level recommended for optimal dental health in our climate.



* parts per million, ppm, is equivalent to one cent in \$10,000

www.pinellascounty.org/utilities

▶ What are the benefits to water fluoridation?

Health experts endorse water fluoridation as the single, most effective public health measure to improve oral health.

- Water fluoridation can reduce tooth decay.
- Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel.
- Fluoride protects a baby's first teeth.
- Water fluoridation is a cost effective means to improving community dental health.

▶ Who benefits?

The entire community benefits from water fluoridation regardless of a person's age, income, level of education, or ability to get dental care. A concentration of 0.8 ppm of fluoride can reduce the amount of cavities in children's baby teeth by as much as 60% and reduce tooth decay in adults by nearly 35%.



▶ What will water fluoridation cost?

Pinellas County Utilities estimates a cost of \$300,000 to construct the fluoridation system with an annual cost of \$115,000 for adding fluoride to the drinking water. This will be absorbed into current operating costs, an average of approximately 32 cents per customer per year, and will not require a water rate increase.

▶ Should my child continue taking fluoride supplements?



The Florida Department of Health recommends that prescription dietary fluoride supplements should not be given to any child who lives or goes to school in a fluoridated water community.

However, you should consult the pediatrician or dentist who prescribed the supplement before making any decisions.

▶ Should my family continue brushing with fluoride toothpaste?

Yes. Fluoridated water is part of a total oral health program. You can get additional protection when you brush with a fluoride toothpaste. You should make sure your young children do not swallow toothpaste.



▶ Is fluoride safe for my pets?

Yes. Fluoride is safe for pets including aquatic life. Having fluoride in the water dish may even benefit the dental health of those pets with teeth.

▶ Who supports water fluoridation?

Virtually all major national and international health, service and professional organizations endorse or support water fluoridation, including the following:

- American Dental Association (ADA)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
- US Public Health Service
- United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- National Academy of Sciences
- American Water Works Association (AWWA)
- Florida Department of Health (FDOH)

▶ Where can I find out more about water fluoridation?

Visit the following web sites for more information on community water fluoridation.

- www.ada.org
- www.ama-assn.org
- www.cdc.gov
- www.who.int



For more information on Utilities' water fluoridation, please contact Pinellas County Utilities at 727-464-4000 or visit us online at www.pinellascounty.org/utilities.