

# Toothpaste Label Propaganda

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AmericanFluoridationSociety.org

Fluoride toothpaste carries a label which says children should use only a pea sized amount. In a separate label box is the statement: "if more than what is used for brushing is accidentally swallowed, get medical help of contact a Poison Control Center right away."

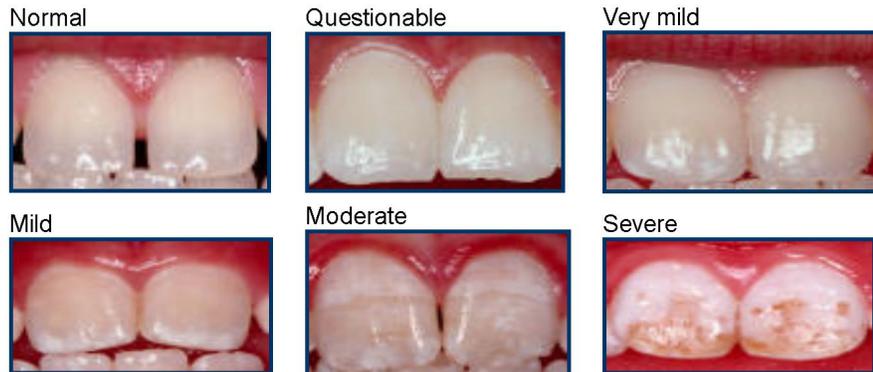
A superficial understanding of the label's two fold origin and purpose is the basis of propaganda designed to inappropriately frighten people about community water fluoridation.



<b>Directions</b>	
adults and children 2 years of age and older	brush teeth thoroughly, preferably after each meal or at least twice a day, or as directed by a dentist or physician
children 2 to 6 years	use only a pea sized amount and supervise child's brushing and rinsing (to minimize swallowing)
children under 2 years	ask a dentist or physician

The label has two parts. The "Directions" include advise to parents sponsored by the American Dental Association. Age specific amounts of toothpaste are recommended.

An association between brown stained teeth and lack of decay was reported in 1925. Fluoride was the cause of both. The challenge became choosing a fluoride concentration which balanced fewer cavities with dental fluorosis.



## Accurate Photos of Enamel Fluorosis

[http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/safety/dental\\_fluorosis.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/safety/dental_fluorosis.htm) January 13, 2013



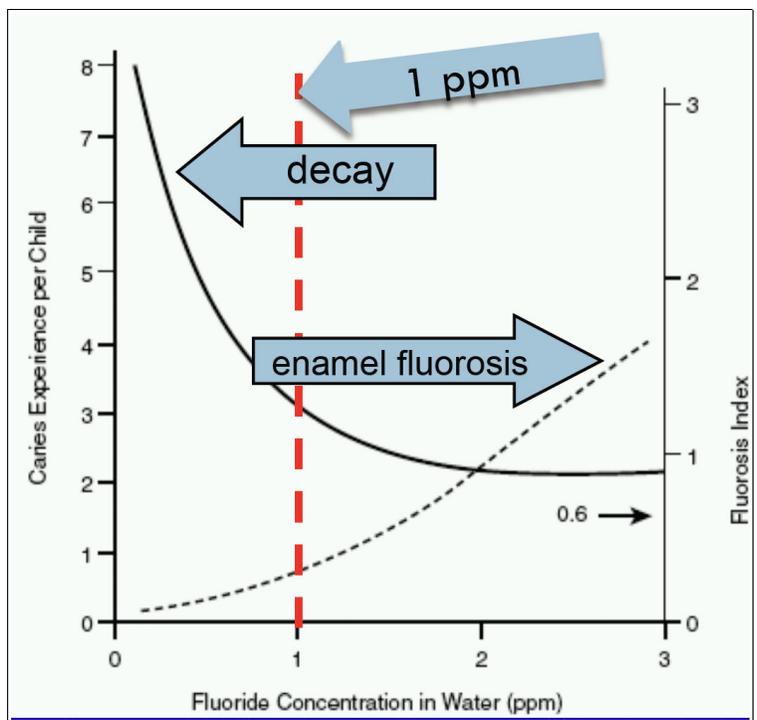
Unaesthetic Tooth Decay



Tooth Decay and abscesses

A graph from the 1940's illustrates how 1 ppm was selected as a balance – preventing decay yet avoiding too much fluorosis.

Because fluoride is now in both public drinking water and oral health products, today's optimally fluoridated water balanced sweet spot is slightly less at 0.7 ppm



In the early 90's dental fluorosis was on the increase. This paper by Pendrys in the Journal of the American Dental Association found toothpaste the prime cause. Toothpaste has about 2000 times more fluoride than fluoridated water. Children whose teeth are still forming must be supervised to use the proper amount of toothpaste to avoid fluorosis.

The American Dental Association, whose seal of approval appears on toothpaste, lobbied the Food and Drug Administration to place the current "Directions" on packaging to assist parents in right sizing children's toothpaste use.

**Risk of Fluorosis in a Fluoridated Population**

Implications for the Dentist and Hygienist

DAVID G. PENDRYS, D.D.S., PH.D.

**TABLE 1**

ADJUSTED ATTRIBUTABLE RISK ESTIMATES FOR MILD-TO-MODERATE FLUOROSIS ON THE MAXILLARY ANTERIOR TEETH.\*

VARIABLE	PERCENTAGE OF CASES THAT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO EXPOSURE TO EACH VARIABLE†	95 PERCENT CONFIDENCE INTERVAL
Brushed teeth more than once per day using more than a pea-sized amount of toothpaste throughout the first eight years of life	71	51-98
Inappropriately given fluoride supplements during the first eight years of life	25	18-34

JADA, Vol. 126, December 1996

**Toothpaste: 71%**

NCBI PubMed National Library of Medicine

J Am Dent Assoc. 2010 Apr;141(4):401-14.

**The risk of enamel fluorosis and caries among Norwegian children: implications for Norway and the United States.**

Pendrys DG, Haugejorden O, Bårdsen A, Wang NJ, Gustavsen F.

Department of Reconstructive Sciences, School of Dental Medicine, University of Connecticut Health Center, Farmington, Conn. 06030, USA. pendrys@nso1.uconn.edu

RESULTS: No children who exclusively used only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste (0.1 percent fluoride) had mild or moderate fluorosis. The authors found a 40 percent reduction in caries risk associated with the early use of pea-sized amounts of fluoridated toothpaste

15 years later Dr. Pendrys published in the Journal of the American Dental Association a follow-up study which proved the "Directions" on the toothpaste label were very effective.

All fluorosis, even that of only cosmetic concern, was avoided and cavities were reduced by 40%

0%

Mild to Moderate Fluorosis

-40%

Unaesthetic Tooth Decay

Another portion of the toothpaste label is a Federal Drug Administration (FDA) required warning that appears on all Over the Counter (OTC) medications.

**Warnings**  
 Keep out of reach of children under 6 years of age.  
 If more than used for brushing is accidentally swallowed, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.


U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
Protecting and Promoting *Your* Health

There are some general warnings required on all OTC drugs, warnings for general classes of OTC drugs, and specific warnings for individual active ingredients. An example of a general warning would be the accidental overdose warning that's required on all orally administered drugs. And that warning reads "in case of accidental overdose, seek professional assistance or contact the poison control center immediately." Again, this is required on all orally ingested drugs. That warning was modified in the case of the anti-carries monograph to read "if you accidentally swallow more than used for" -- and you select brushing or rinsing -- "seek professional assistance or contact the poison control center immediately."

General Overview of OTC labeling.  
 Bob Sherman  
 Division of OTC Drug Products  
 Food and Drug Administration  
 Liaison to the Dental Plaque Subcommittee of the NonPrescription Drugs Advisory Committee

[www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/ac/98/transcpt/3425t2.rtf](http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/ac/98/transcpt/3425t2.rtf)

The message is determined by the FDA regulations and is completely unrelated to drinking water and the ADA sponsored instructions to parents



Note that the same warning appears on oral health products whether or not they contain fluoride.

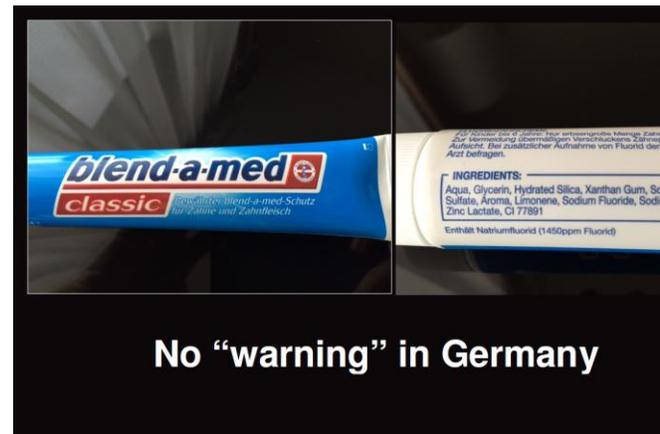


Similar labels, all required by the same FDA rules, appear on Athlete's Foot spray, aspirin, Tylenol, Benadryl and many other over the counter medications.

You can see how the FDA rules create very similar labeling on all these Over the Counter medications.



Other countries without a blanket OTC label policy carry no similar warning. This fluoride toothpaste is from Germany. Fluoride toothpaste sold in Western Europe does not contain a warning because health officials consider fluoride toothpaste to be safe.



**No "warning" in Germany**

**The instructions designed by the FDA to avoid acute poisonings has no connection whatsoever to the Directions placed by the ADA to decrease fluorosis.** The pea sized amount recommended is completely safe. National Poison Control reports show that there have been no childhood deaths from toothpaste in the US.

Drinking water with 0.7 ppm fluoride to prevent cavities is completely safe. Arguing that fluoridated water is toxic because of the toothpaste label is fear based propaganda.

Using a false and misleading interpretation of the tooth paste label seeks to convince civic leaders and average citizens to reject what Surgeon General C. Everett Koop called ""the single most important commitment a community can make to its children and to future generations."

Additional reference: ADA Statement on Toothpaste Label