

Fluoridation is not medication

Fluorine is the 13th most common element in the earth's crust. It exists naturally only as fluoride ions which are a mineral present naturally in most public water supplies. Local water systems adjust the level, usually by adding a little more fluoride to a level that decreases cavities without causing health harms.

Fluoride is nature's way to fight tooth decay. The benefits were first confirmed during the early 1900s in Colorado—where the water had unusually high levels of fluoride. Mottled tooth enamel (enamel fluorosis) was associated with fewer cavities. Observations of natural fluoride around the U.S. found no health harms even with fluoride levels as high as 8 mg/L.

The first city to fluoridate was Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1945. Drinking water with an adjusted fluoride level of 1 ppm prevented cavities. 71 years of large population use including repeated sophisticated reviews of all the credible science have shown no health harms to 0.7 ppm fluoride in drinking water.

Those opposing fluoridation have argued that the practice is an illegal act of forced mass medication. A significant body of U.S case law has uniformly upheld fluoridation based on the following principles and findings:

- Fluoride is a naturally present mineral.
- Fluoride concentration adjustment is analogous to food supplementation.
- No one is forced to drink tap water.
- Citizens have no absolute right to be wholly freed from restraint.
- The common good justifies fluoridation
- Fluoridation is specifically within government's normal powers.
- There is no constitutional right to specify tap water's chemical composition
- Water systems have the right and obligation to specify their product's composition
- Fluoride water additives are not medications.

People have a wide range of tolerances to many natural substances such as table salt, water, and calcium. This is true also for fluoride in drinking water. Concerns about “dosage” are unwarranted.

Fluoride ions can be used as water additives, as medications, as industrial chemicals, be naturally present in the aquatic environment and can be part of harmful pollution. Different laws and regulatory governmental bodies apply to different uses. The EPA in concert with the American Water Works Association and the National Sanitation Foundation specifically are responsible for the overseeing water additives including fluoride.