

American Dental Association

ADACommons

Patient Dental Health Education Brochures

Special Collections

1955

Fluoride...less tooth decay (1955)

American Dental Association

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.ada.org/patientbrochures>



Part of the [Community Health and Preventive Medicine Commons](#), [Dental Public Health and Education Commons](#), and the [History of Science, Technology, and Medicine Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

American Dental Association, "Fluoride...less tooth decay (1955)" (1955). *Patient Dental Health Education Brochures*. 172.

<https://commons.ada.org/patientbrochures/172>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at ADACommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Patient Dental Health Education Brochures by an authorized administrator of ADACommons. For more information, please contact commons@ada.org.

FLUORIDE



...less tooth decay

FLUORIDE in the drinking water

.....

Fluoridation of water supply. The fluoridation of public water supplies is widely accepted as a method of reducing the occurrence of dental decay. Of all the preventive methods in use, fluoridation offers the greatest hope for preventing dental caries because of its easy application for large numbers of people and its low cost.

The expression “*fluoridation of water supply*” refers to the adjustment of the fluoride content to the level optimal for dental health in waters that are deficient in the substance.

The benefits continue throughout life. Children who have used water containing 1 ppm (*part per million*) or more of fluorine have only about a third as much dental caries as children who have used

water containing inadequate amounts of fluorine.

The American Dental Association recommends as safe and effective the fluoridation of municipal water supplies that are deficient in fluoride. Other national organizations that have adopted policies favorable to fluoridation are the American Medical Association, National Research Council, U.S. Public Health Service, State and Territorial Health Officers Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association of Public Health Dentists and the Commission on Chronic Illness.

FLUORIDATION IN THE PREVENTION OF DENTAL CARIES, an American Dental Association publication, furnishes additional technical information.

FLUORIDE applied to the teeth of children

.....

Topical application of fluoride. Another effective preventive measure against dental caries is the topical (*surface*) application of a fluoride solution to the teeth of children.

Clinical experience has shown that topical fluoride applications reduce the occurrence of dental decay by an average of 40 percent. The results vary somewhat in individual children.

The Council on Dental Health of the American Dental Association recommends that in areas where the drinking water is deficient in fluoride, topical fluoride treatment “*should be used routinely in private dental offices and in school and community dental health programs.*”

In topical fluoride treatments the dentist cleans

the teeth, dries them thoroughly and then applies the solution allowing it to dry on the teeth. A series of four separate applications is given in each complete treatment. The four applications should be given at intervals of from two to seven days. It is recommended that treatments be given at the approximate ages of 3, 7, 10 and 13, so that all the teeth will be treated soon after they erupt. Treatment may be given at other ages, however, when the applications have not been made at the recommended times.

Even when public water supplies are fluoridated, topical fluoride applications should be continued for children who have not had the benefit of fluoridated water since birth.

The fluoridation of public water supplies and the topical application of fluoride do not prevent all tooth decay. They are partial preventives only—not cure-alls. For dental health, regular dental care and mouth hygiene at home are necessary.

What is fluorine? It is a chemical element, compounds of which are used in fluoridation and topical applications. The compounds usually employed in fluoridation are sodium fluoride, sodium silicofluoride or hydrofluosilicic acid. For topical applications, sodium fluoride is most often used. Fluorides in large quantities are poisonous, but when used in the amounts necessary for making topical applications and for fluoridating water, they are entirely harmless. Because fluorine is a poison, however, self treatment is dangerous.

How was fluoride treatment discovered? Some years ago dentists noticed that in certain parts of the country the teeth of children and adults had severe mottling of the enamel (brown stains) but that there was considerably less dental decay than the national average. Investigations showed that both the mottled enamel and the lessened amount of tooth decay

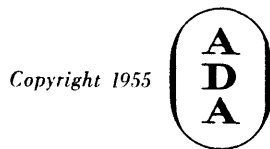
were the result of fluorides occurring naturally in drinking water.

The discovery of the fluorine-dental caries relationship permitted others to develop the technic of topical applications.

Research also revealed that when fluorides are added to the water supply the beneficial results are similar to those found where fluorides occur naturally.

Results of the independent studies at Grand Rapids, Mich., Newburgh, N. Y., and Brantford, Ont., now in their tenth year, show that dental caries can be brought under a large measure of control by the fluoridation of public water supplies.

Tablets, dentifrices, mouth washes or chewing gum containing fluoride cannot be an adequate substitute for community fluoridation. Fluorides for individual use should be employed only under the supervision of a dentist or physician.



Copyright 1955

AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 222 E. Superior St., Chicago 11, Illinois