



Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry  
Association canadienne de la santé dentaire publique

## Position Statement on Community Water Fluoridation, September 2014

The Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry endorses community water fluoridation as an important public health measure to prevent dental caries (tooth decay) in a population. It is safe, effective, ethical, legal, reduces oral health disparities and is cost-effective.

### Rationale

Community water fluoridation started in Canada in 1945 and, up to the present, a substantial body of scientific research has been accumulated on its efficacy and safety. More than 3,000 studies published in recognized peer-reviewed journals have been reviewed and analyzed repeatedly. The results from the highest quality research have been compiled into systematic reviews and reports to provide the best available evidence and guidance about community water fluoridation to improve dental health. Since 1997, a significant number of systematic reviews and reports on community water fluoridation and the effect of fluorides have been published in: Europe,<sup>1,2</sup> the United Kingdom,<sup>3,4</sup> Ireland,<sup>5</sup> Australia,<sup>6-8</sup> New Zealand,<sup>9</sup> the United States<sup>10a-c,11-13</sup> and Canada<sup>14,15</sup>. Most recently, in Canada, Health Canada released the "Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality: Guideline Technical Document — Fluoride,"<sup>16</sup> and the Government of Canada's, "Joint Government Response to Environmental Petition Number 221: Petition to Discontinue Water Fluoridation."<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec<sup>18</sup> released its report, "Water fluoridation: An analysis of the health benefits and risks."

### The major conclusions from all these reviews and reports are:

- Community water fluoridation is safe. The weight of scientific research supports no increased risk of cancer, bone disease, I.Q. deficits, thyroid suppression, kidney disease, diseases of the immune or reproductive systems, nor genetic, neurological, developmental, or any other health effects.
- Community water fluoridation is effective in preventing tooth decay even when other sources of fluoride, e.g. toothpastes, topical fluorides, are used.
- The only adverse effect linked to community water fluoridation at the recommended level is an increased risk of mild dental fluorosis. It is a cosmetic, not a health effect, and mild dental fluorosis is not noticed by most people.
- Community water fluoridation is a public health measure that benefits all residents served by community water supplies, regardless of their age, sex, culture, social or economic status or educational level.
- Scientific research finds no evidence of negative environmental impacts from adding controlled amounts of fluoride to the drinking water.

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