





Community


Water


Fluoridation


Talking Points


 **The first step to ensuring all Pennsylvanians have preventive dental care is to fluoridate our public water systems.** Adding fluoride to the drinking water ensures that everyone, regardless of age or income, receives valuable health benefits.


 **Fluoride is a proven cavity fighter.** Sixty years of scientific studies show the safety and efficiency of fluoridation. Fluoride reduces tooth decay between 20 and 40 percent.


 **Fluoride is a naturally occurring element that has been proven to strengthen teeth and prevent disease.** It has been lauded by countless national and international health organizations as one of the most important public health achievements of the 20th century.

 As recently as 2004, the Surgeon General called **fluoridation the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health over a lifetime.**

 In instances where changes need to be implemented at a substantial cost to continue water fluoridation, it is very important that we don't lose sight on the long-term consequences of a decision. **The short-term cost of continuing to fluoridate our water would be more than offset by the long-term benefits of people having a much better foundation for good oral health.**

 **In the end, community water fluoridation saves money.** The average lifetime cost per person to fluoridate a water supply is less than the cost of one dental filling. For most cities, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs.

 **Numerous studies have shown that children who drink fluoridated water since birth have 20 to 40 percent less tooth decay than those children who drink from non-fluoridated water supplies.** However, fluoridation contributes much more to overall health than simply reducing tooth decay. It prevents needless pain from infection, suffering and loss of teeth and saves costs associated with dental treatment.

 **Tooth decay remains the single most common chronic disease in children.** Population-based prevention programs are the first line of defense against tooth decay. This is why more than 125 national and international organizations including the American Dental Association, the CDC, the American Medical Association, the World Health Organization and other recognize the public health benefits of community water fluoridation for preventing dental decay.