



Summary of Community Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends community water fluoridation to reduce dental caries (tooth decay).

Major Findings

- After water fluoridation began, communities saw a median increase of 15 percentage points (based on 11 studies) in the percentage of caries-free children compared to communities without water fluoridation.
- When community water fluoridation was discontinued, an increase in dental caries occurred.
- A systematic review of the economic evidence found that the economic benefit of community water fluoridation is greater than the cost.



What is Community Water Fluoridation?

Community water fluoridation is the controlled adjustment of fluoride in a public water supply to reach an optimal concentration to prevent dental caries among members of the community.

Facts about Dental Caries and Water Fluoridation

Dental caries or cavities, more commonly known as tooth decay, are caused by a breakdown of the enamel. This breakdown is the result of bacteria on teeth that break down foods and produce acid that destroys tooth enamel and results in tooth decay.

- Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic conditions among children in the United States.¹
- The percentage of children and adolescents with untreated tooth decay is twice as high for those from low-income families (25%) compared with children from higher-income households (11%).²

Learn More

Summary of Evidence and Task Force Finding and Full-text Publications

<https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/dental-caries-cavities-community-water-fluoridation>

CDC, Oral Health
www.cdc.gov/oralhealth

CDC, Community Water Fluoridation
<https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/index.html>

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). Children's Oral Health. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/childrens-oral-health/index.htm>.

² Dye BA, Xianfen L, Beltrán-Aguilar ED. *Selected Oral Health Indicators in the United States 2005–2008*. NCHS Data Brief, no. 96. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2012.