



**The human body needs water to function properly.
But which water is best for your oral health?**

In the 1940s, scientists discovered a direct correlation between the level of naturally occurring fluoride in public drinking water and the amount of cavities experienced by local residents. Soon after, communities began adding fluoride to public water sources, helping reduce the number of cavities in their regions.

Not all water is fluoridated—you may not be getting enough fluoride

But not all public water companies fluoridate their water, and well and spring waters carry varying levels of fluoride by region. Factor in the popularity of bottled water, which typically contains little, if any, fluoride, and your chances of getting the right amount of fluoride according to current dental industry standards is unlikely.

Protect your family—do your homework

To make sure you and your family are getting the right amount of fluoride, contact your public water supplier and ask what level of fluoride is in the water. If you have a well or spring, a water test will reveal the water's natural fluoride content. For bottled or filtered water, contact the manufacturing company for information.

Talk to your dentist

Share the information with your dentist. Since age plays a major factor in determining how much fluoride you should have, treatment plans may vary by family member. Also, be sure to discuss how much water you drink each day. People who drink large amounts of fluoridated water may be getting too much fluoride. Your dentist will be able to recommend the appropriate course of action based on the information you supply.

You can get too much of a good thing

While not getting enough fluoride can lead to tooth decay, getting too much can cause fluorosis. Children under age eight are at greatest risk. Mild cases of fluorosis are evidenced by a few white spots on teeth. More severe cases turn teeth a brownish color and weaken the enamel.

**For information on the TRICARE Dental Program, or to find more “Dental Health 101” tips,
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