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**OPHA** – Oregon Public Health Association

**Section:** Oral Health

**Topic Area:** Community Water Fluoridation


Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that is released from rocks into the water, soil and air ["Fluorides – PubChem Public Chemical Database". The PubChem Project. USA: National Center for Biotechnology Information. Identification.]. Thousands of studies and multiple systematic reviews since fluoridation began in 1945 have demonstrated fluoride reduces tooth decay (https://americanfluoridationsociety.org/category/research/effectiveness/). In the United States, tooth decay is one of the most common, chronic childhood disease (https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/disease/dental_caries.html).

Water fluoridation is the adjustment of fluoride ions, either upwards or downwards, in community water systems to a level of optimal health benefits.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have acknowledged Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) as one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century (https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/basics/index.htm). The American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, US Public Health Service, World Health Organization and over 100 other prestigious professional and scientific organizations recommend water fluoridation.


Oregon ranks 48th in the United States in percentage of citizens who are able to access fluoridated water (https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/water_fluoridation/state/ALL). In an American Dental Association Fluoridation Status document, as of 2012, Portland, Oregon was the 2nd largest U.S. city that did not have community water fluoridation (http://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/MemberCenter/Flies/Fluoridation_Status_of_50_Largest_U.S._Cities_ashx). At that time, San Jose, CA was the largest city on the list but has since fluoridated its drinking
Community water fluoridation can reduce the number of children suffering from rampant tooth decay that requires general anesthesia or sedation to repair, both of which carry potential serious risks and significant expense.

The Oregon Public Health Association Board stands with the American Public Health Association in their support for community water fluoridation as a safe, effective, equitable and economically sound approach to improving the oral health of all community members.