



# Oregon Public Health Association

818 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. #1201  
Portland OR 97204  
[www.OregonPublicHealth.org](http://www.OregonPublicHealth.org)

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**Section:** Oral Health

**Topic Area:** Community Water Fluoridation

Oral health affects overall health and well-being. Diabetes, cardiovascular health, and pregnancy are a few of the conditions negatively impacted by poor oral health [<https://www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health#diagnosis>].

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](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.

According to the CDC, “Drinking fluoridated water keeps teeth strong and reduces cavities by about 25% in children and adults” above and beyond using fluoride-containing products [<https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/index.html>]. “CWF provides cost-savings for large and small communities [<https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/basics/index.htm>]. An economic review of multiple studies found that benefits ranged from \$1.10 to \$135 of benefit for every \$1 invested.” [<https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/basics/cost.htm>]

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](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 2<sup>nd</sup> largest U.S. city that did not have community water fluoridation [[http://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/MemberCenter/Files/Fluoridation\\_Status\\_of\\_50\\_Largest\\_U.S.\\_Cities.ashx](http://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/MemberCenter/Files/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 water. [<https://healthjournalism.org/blog/2017/01/san-jose-calif-no-longer-nations-largest-city-without-fluoridated-drinking-water/>]

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.