



YOUR WATER.



YOUR HEALTH.



OUR PRIORITY. SM

## STRAIGHT Talk Water Fluoridation

In 2000, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 66% of residents using community water systems, or 162 million people, had access to fluoridated tap water. That number continues to grow. Here are some facts about fluoridation to keep in mind:

- ▶ North American water systems have added fluoride, a naturally occurring element, to their water supplies since 1945. Since that time, child cavity rates have been reduced substantially where fluoridation has been implemented.
- ▶ The fluoridation of drinking water is endorsed by the American Dental Association, the American Medical Association, and the US Public Health Service.
- ▶ The CDC proclaimed fluoridation to be one of the top ten greatest public health achievements of the past century.
- ▶ As part of its “Healthy People 2010” campaign, the US Department of Health and Human Services set a goal of increasing the proportion of the American population served by community water systems with optimally fluoridated water to 75% by the year 2010.
- ▶ A number of bottled water companies have started adding fluoride to their products because of the health benefits, and they label their bottles so that consumers are aware that fluoride is present.
- ▶ Drinking water’s fluoride content is limited under federal law. The maximum level of fluoride deemed acceptable by the US Environmental Protection Agency is 4 milligrams per liter (mg/L). The CDC has established the “optimal level” for fluoride content in drinking water to be in the range of 0.7 mg/L to 1.2 mg/L.
- ▶ Despite fluoridation’s benefits to dental health, exposure to high levels of fluoride over a long time can cause dental fluorosis, a condition which leads to mottled tooth enamel, tooth discoloration, and in some cases erosion of affected teeth to the gumline. However, the levels of fluoride found in drinking water are considered very low.



American Water Works  
Association

6666 West Quincy Avenue  
Denver, CO 80235-3098  
[www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)  
303.734.3410