

Community Water Fluoridation

Community water fluoridation is recommended as an important, safe and effective measure to improve the oral health of Nova Scotians.

The Facts

- **Oral health** is essential to overall health and well-being at every age and stage of life. A healthy mouth allows a person to eat, speak, learn and socialize without discomfort or embarrassment.
- **Tooth decay** is the most common chronic condition of childhood. It can lead to unnecessary pain or suffering, infection, tooth loss, or costly restorative treatment. In school-aged children, poor oral health outcomes are associated with lower school attendance and performance.
- **Populations** that experience the most tooth decay are also those who have the greatest difficulty accessing oral health care.
- **Fluoride** is a mineral that strengthens teeth, making them more resistant to decay. It is naturally occurring in water, soil, plants and food, and is added to various dental products.
- **Community water fluoridation** is the process of adjusting the amount of naturally occurring fluoride in drinking water supplies to achieve a level that is optimal for oral health.
- **Communities** with access to fluoridated water report lower rates of tooth decay.
- **NSH Public Health** recommends water fluoridation based on a collection of credible science, expert knowledge, and community experience.

How It Works

Community water fluoridation delivers two kinds of fluoride protection against tooth decay:

- 1) **Topical:** when the outside of teeth come in direct contact with the fluoride in drinking water.
- 2) **Systemic:** when fluoridated water is consumed, fluoride is made available inside the body to become part of the tooth's structure while it is still developing.

Community water fluoridation is endorsed by more than 90 provincial, national and international professional organizations, associations and governments.

NSH Public Health Supports Community Water Fluoridation

It is universal and accessible.

1

Community water fluoridation reaches everyone in a community regardless of their age, income or access to dental care services or supplies.

It improves oral health for everyone.

2

Community water fluoridation improves oral health outcomes across populations and age groups. It is especially beneficial for those that experience greater rates of tooth decay.

It is a preventative approach.

3

Community water fluoridation delivers fluoride protection to the entire community, helping to prevent tooth decay before treatment is required. Investing in prevention is beneficial for individuals, communities, and the health care system.

It is regulated and monitored.

4

Drinking water supplies are regularly tested to ensure that optimal fluoride levels are always maintained. This level is set by Health Canada and accounts for exposure to fluoride from other common sources.

It contributes to healthy, vibrant communities.

5

Improving oral health contributes to the overall health of a community. Community water fluoridation is part of creating places where people live, learn, work and play that support and promote health - now and into the future.

Additional Resources

Nova Scotia Health - [Oral Health | Nova Scotia Health \(nshealth.ca\)](https://www.nshealth.ca)

Health Canada - [Community Water Fluoridation](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada - [Position Statement on Community Water Fluoridation](#)

Nova Scotia Dental Association - [Understanding Fluoride](#)

Please contact your local Public Health office for more information.

www.nshealth.ca/public-health

