



Fluoridation Facts__

Promoting Oral Health in Southern California

Since 2007, the **Metropolitan Water District of Southern California** has added **fluoride** to its water supplies to help prevent tooth decay among Southern California residents, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health.

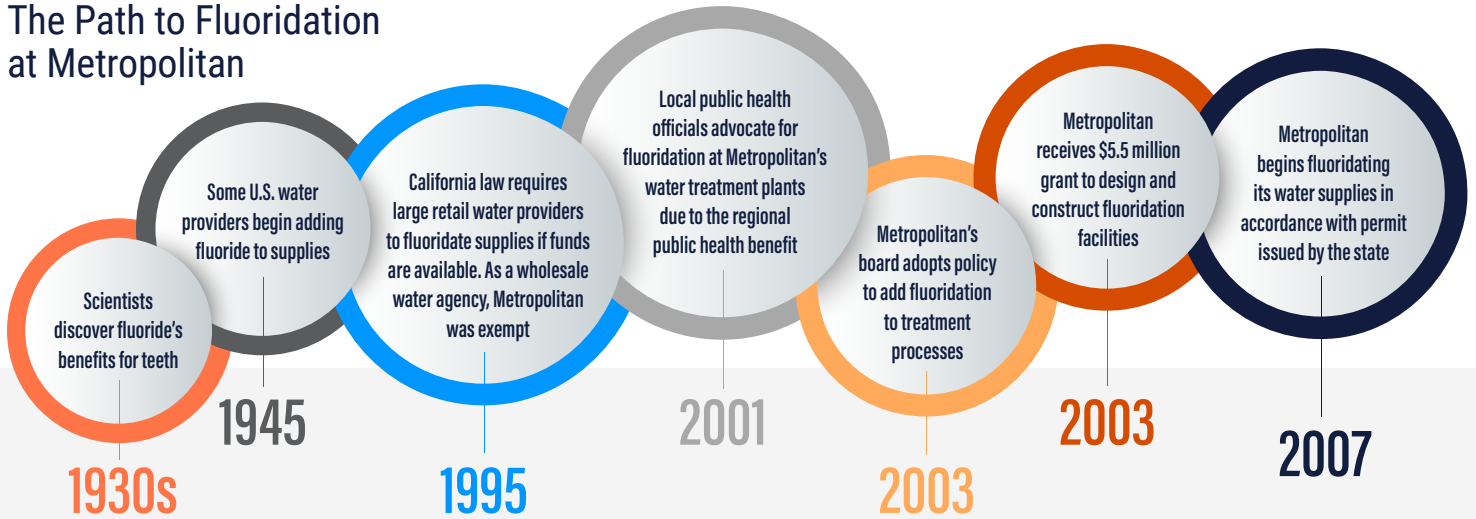
Fluoride naturally occurs in the environment, including in rivers, lakes and groundwater. Metropolitan adjusts naturally occurring fluoride to the recommended level of **0.7 milligrams per liter** (or parts per million), considered optimal by public health agencies. Fluoridation of drinking water is considered one of the greatest modern public health achievements by the CDC. Today, most of the 50 largest cities in the United States add fluoride to their drinking water to support oral health.



A Proven Solution for Stronger Teeth & Healthier Communities

- Community water fluoridation is supported by major national and international health service organizations, including the American Dental Association, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the CDC, and the World Health Organization.
- More than 60 years of scientific research has found that people living in communities with fluoridated water have healthier teeth and fewer cavities than those living in areas where water is not fluoridated.
- Drinking fluoridated water reduces cavities by about 25% in children and adults, according to the CDC. Fluoride helps teeth resist decay by strengthening the protective layer of tooth enamel and can reverse newly formed cavities.
- Community water fluoridation is the single most cost-effective, equitable, and safe public health measure to prevent tooth decay, according to the California Department of Public Health. It cuts across socioeconomic divides, offering equal health benefits.
- The ADA estimates that the lifetime cost per person to fluoridate a water system is less than the cost of one dental filling.

The Path to Fluoridation at Metropolitan



Addressing Common Concerns & Questions

Despite fluoridation's proven record, some consumers may not be familiar with its benefits or may be concerned about having this mineral in their tap water.

- Drinking water standards, including those for fluoride, are set by state and federal regulators based on the best available science; Metropolitan complies with those regulations. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's maximum contaminant level for fluoride in drinking water is 4 milligrams per liter – more than five times the level recommended for community fluoridation, used by Metropolitan. California's MCL is 2 mg/L.
- Metropolitan uses fluorosilicic acid, one of three primary agents used to fluoridate water, because of its proven safety, reliability, and cost effectiveness.
- While exposure to higher levels of fluoride can cause dental fluorosis, a discoloration of tooth enamel, the condition is uncommon and most occurrences in communities with optimally fluoridated water are very mild.
- Thousands of studies on the health effects of fluoride have found it to be safe for consumption at the levels set in community fluoridation programs.
- Some studies have associated high levels of fluoride – more than double the optimal level of 0.7 mg/L in California tap water – with reduced IQ in children.



Additional Information:



State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

About Metropolitan

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established regional cooperative of 26 cities and public water agencies, which collectively serve 19 million people in six counties. Metropolitan imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies and supports its members through the development of increased conservation, recycling, storage and other resource management programs.

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