

2016 Surgeon General’s Statement on Community Water Fluoridation



Over the past 70 years, community water fluoridation has contributed to dramatic declines in both the prevalence and severity of tooth decay, leading the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to name it as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century, alongside immunizations, family planning, tobacco control, and motor vehicle safety.

Water fluoridation is the best method for delivering fluoride to all members of the community, regardless of age, education, income level or access to routine dental care. Fluoride’s effectiveness in preventing tooth decay extends throughout one’s life, resulting in fewer – and less severe – cavities. In fact, each generation born over the past 70 years has enjoyed better dental health than the one before it. That’s the very essence of the American promise.

Our progress on this issue over the past 70 years has been undeniable.

But we still have work to do. Because we know that so much of our health is determined by zip code rather than genetic code. That’s why creating a culture of disease prevention through community efforts – and ensuring health equity for all – is one of my highest priorities.

Community water fluoridation helps us meet these goals; as it is one of the most cost-effective, equitable, and safe measures communities can take to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health. Advocates and community leaders have fought to make water fluoridation a reality in communities throughout our country.

Today, we applaud their efforts. But our work is far from finished, and we will not rest until every community is equipped with the many tools they need to help their residents live healthy, happy lives.

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United States Surgeon General

This statement is also available as a PDF file [PDF– 166K ].

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