Frequently asked questions

fluoride

Q: What is fluoride?

A: Fluoride is a naturally occurring compound found in water, plants, rocks, soil, air and most foods.

Q: Where does it come from?

A: The fluoride used for water fluoridation can be extracted at the same time as other minerals, such as phosphates from ground rocks. The co-production of natural fluoride through an already established mining process is an efficient use of our natural resources.

Q: Why is fluoride added to the water?

A: While water supplies naturally contain some level of fluoride, there is not always sufficient fluoride to prevent tooth decay, especially when the water source comes from above the ground.

Q: What benefits could water fluoridation have for me and my family?

A: Water fluoridation helps to protect adults and children from tooth decay. It provides additional protection to fluoridated toothpaste. Preventing tooth decay can save your family the pain and discomfort of toothache and the expense required to treat the disease.

Q: Is water fluoridation poisonous?

A: No, water fluoridation is not poisonous. Anything can be dangerous at very high levels, but fluoride at less than 1 part per million is extremely safe.

Q: Does water fluoridation cause cancer or bone damage?

A: No, water fluoridation is not harmful, and numerous studies have found it does not cause cancer, osteoporosis, bone fractures or any other disease. Rates of these diseases in fluoridated states are no higher than in Queensland.

Q: Does water fluoridation cause allergic reactions?

A: No, water fluoridation has not been proven to cause any allergic reactions. Reviews by peak health bodies around the world have found no connection between water fluoridation and allergies, hypersensitivity or other immunological effects. Even sea water contains more fluoride than the levels in fluoridated water.

Q: Does water fluoridation affect the taste or smell of water?

A: No, fluoride does not affect the taste or smell of water.

Q: Does water fluoridation have any side effects?

A: Dental fluorosis or mottling of the teeth can occur if young children get too much fluoride when their adult teeth are forming. This condition affects only a small proportion of children and is associated with excess consumption of fluoride from all sources, especially toothpaste or fluoride supplements. Most fluorosis is mild and only detectable by a dentist. The rare form of severe fluorosis causes pitting of the tooth enamel, however this is usually caused by children eating toothpaste, taking too many fluoride supplements or a combination of both.

Q: Is it possible for my family to drink too much fluoridated water?

A: Fluoridated water contains less than one part per million of fluoride. The level is set lower in Queensland than other areas of Australia because we need to drink more water due to our hotter climate. Because such a small amount of fluoride is used to top up natural levels, large amounts of water can be safely consumed.

Q: Is it fair to make everybody drink fluoridated water? Why don't people who want fluoride use fluoride supplements?

A: One of the advantages of water fluoridation is it allows all members of the community to benefit from the protective effects of fluoride, without cost or effort. Fluoride supplements do not provide the same benefit as water fluoridation.

Q: What if I really don't want it?

A: Those who choose not to benefit from water fluoridation can still choose other drinking water sources (e.g. bottled water, reverse osmosis filtered water).

Q: Will the Government be offering rebates for water filters?

A: The Government will not be subsidising reverse osmosis water filters for those who choose not to access fluoridated water. Reverse osmosis systems cost around $300.00 fully installed and are available from water filter retailers and selected hardware stores.

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