

Fluoride and and your Oral Health

By Hema Patel, DDS



Did you know that recent studies show that water fluoridation reduces dental caries in permanent teeth by approximately **18 to 40** percent. We all assume that the fluoride we get from the toothpaste and tap water is adequate for our needs. This is not always the case. It is best to consult your dentist if you are a candidate for additional fluoride. To understand this topic better, let's find out what fluoride is and what role it plays for our oral health.

Fluoride occurs in the earth's crust, in combination with other minerals. A small amount of fluoride is present naturally in all water sources. Water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the natural level of fluoride to a concentration sufficient to protect against tooth decay. Just because of a community water fluoridation, fifty percent of children ages 5 to 17 have never had a cavity in their permanent teeth.

According to the April 2000 *Journal of Dental Research*, the use of fluoride since 1960 has been the primary factor in saving some \$40 billion in oral health care costs in the United States. The annual cost of community water fluoridation is approximately \$0.50 per person. The lifetime cost to provide fluoridated water to one person is less than the cost of a single dental filling.

Now let's take a moment to find out how fluoride can benefit everyone including adults?

1. Fewer cavities: Fluoride not only protects your teeth from getting new cavities but it also helps remineralize enamel weakened by early cavity development. Fluorides also control root surface decay on exposed roots from gum recession in adults.
2. Controlling and maintaining the gum disease: Fluorides inhibit the bleeding and tender gums caused by plaque bacteria and prevent reinfection after the active gum treatment.
3. Less Sensitivity: Fluorides coat and insulate sensitive teeth effectively that occurs from gum recession and natural wear on teeth.
4. Orthodontic, Crown and bridge, implants and dentures maintenance: Fluorides help control gingivitis and decalcifications associated most commonly with braces. It also prevents recurring decay around the crowns and bridges, blocks plaque formation around implants and help control bad breath and irritation from dentures.

5. Side effects from medicines: Many prescription medications can decrease saliva flow and increase patient's risk of dental infection. Fluorides help protect against decay.
6. Post surgical rinse: Fluorides control bacteria and help tissue heal after surgery.

If you have any question regarding this or any other dental related problems feel free to contact me at 510-796-1656 or write me at hp_dds@yahoo.com

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