



Fluoride: Is my drinking water fluoridated?

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Does my community add fluoride to drinking water?

Your dentist may ask you if your drinking water is fluoridated. When developing a fluoride treatment plan, dentists consider all the ways you may get fluoride. This includes water, food and beverages made with fluoridated water, and fluoridated toothpaste. To protect your teeth from cavities, your dentist wants optimum levels of fluoride.

How is fluoride added to drinking water?

Washington state does not require public water systems to add fluoride to drinking water. If a community chooses to add fluoride to its drinking water, the amount must be between 0.5 and 0.9 parts per million. In general, water systems strive to maintain a level of 0.7 part per million.

If you wonder about fluoride in your drinking water, ask your water system. However, there may not be a simple answer. The following list shows how fluoride gets into drinking water.

- ◆ Your system adds fluoride to its drinking water.
- ◆ Your system buys water from a neighboring system that adds fluoride to its water, using an intertie between the two systems.
- ◆ Your system blends fluoridated and non-fluoridated water. This blending affects the amount of fluoride in drinking water. The only way to know for sure is to test the water at your tap. Testing is available through certified labs.
- ◆ Your drinking water has naturally occurring fluoride. Fluoride is a mineral in soils that may get into water. Very little natural fluoride is found in western Washington, but it's common in eastern Washington. Public water systems are required to test their water to ensure it doesn't have too much natural fluoride.

What should I tell my dentist?

The more you share with your dentist about fluoride levels in your drinking water, the better.

In most cases, your water system can provide you with information about fluoride in your drinking water. If your water system is required to provide a yearly Consumer Confidence Report, it will describe drinking water quality, including fluoride levels. You can also call your water system to find out levels of fluoride in its drinking water.

Additional resources

For more information on fluoride, visit our website at

doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/FluorideInDrinkingWater.

For more information

Our publications are online at doh.wa.gov/odwpubs.

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