

## Fluoridation: Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. What is fluoride?**

Fluoride is an abundant- naturally occurring element found in rocks, soil and fresh and ocean water. When fluoride is present in drinking water at optimal levels, it has been shown to promote oral health by preventing tooth decay.

### **Q. Is my water fluoridated?**

Check [this table](#) to see if your water is fluoridated.

### **Q. Is fluoride OK for my pets?**

Fluoride in levels administered for drinking water is safe for humans and all animals. Over 50 years of research and experience have shown fluoridation at optimal levels does not harm people or the environment. Leading scientists and health professionals, professional organizations and governments around the world support community water fluoridation.

### **Q. What do health professionals say about fluoride?**

Medical and dental experts endorse water fluoridation as the single, most effective public health measure to improve oral health. Through more than 50 years of extensive research, drinking fluoridated water has been scientifically proven to be safe and effective.

### **Q. What should I do when fluoridation starts?**

Most people do not need to make any changes to their drinking water habits. For children and adults taking prescription fluoride supplements, health experts recommend discontinuing supplements with the receipt of fluoridated water. Please consult with your pediatrician or dentist for more information.

### **Q. Why fluoridate drinking water?**

- The amount of natural fluoride in water supplies is generally not enough to provide oral health benefits. Water fluoridation is the addition of small amounts of fluoride to a water supply to achieve the optimal fluoride level that helps prevent tooth decay.
- Fluoridated water benefits the entire community, children and adults of all ages, especially low-income and underserved populations.
- California law requires water systems to fluoridate their water supplies, if funding is available.

### **Q. How much fluoride will be added to my water?**

The SFPUC will supplement naturally occurring fluoride in your drinking water to meet the optimal level recommended by the California Department of Health Services (1.0 part per million, or 1.0 milligram of fluoride per liter of water). This level of concentration is set by the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### **Q. Can you give an example of "parts per million" (ppm)?**

There is one drop of fluoride in one million drops of water. Another example would be one inch in 16 miles; one cent in \$10,000; one ounce of salt out of 62,500 pounds; one ounce of oil out of 7,812.5 gallons.