

Avoiding just one filling would pay for fluoridation for a family of four for over 30 years.

For most cities, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs.

Water that has been fortified with fluoride is similar to fortifying salt with iodine, breads and cereals with folic acid and milk with Vitamin D.

Dental health is an essential part of everyday life. Good dental health enhances our ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow and convey our feelings and emotions through facial expressions.

Fluoride helps produce this healthy winning wheel



To find out if your public water system is fluoridated, go to Missouri's fluoridation map at www.health.mo.gov/waterfluoridation. Or, to find out how much natural fluoride is in your private well, contact your local county health department for this testing service.

If your water supply is not optimally fluoridated, talk to your dentist about options to increase your daily fluoride intake such as fluoride supplements or fluoride mouthwash.

For more information, go to:

- www.health.mo.gov/oralhealth
- www.ada.org
- www.ILikeMyTeeth.org
- www.pewstates.org/projects/childrens-dental-campaign-328060



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Healthy Teeth Healthy Smiles



*and the role
fluoride plays*



Good dental health is necessary for better overall health. Taking proper care of your mouth, teeth and gums is important to preventing tooth decay, gum disease and bad breath. Here are some tips for a healthy mouth:

1. Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
2. Floss daily.
3. Drink fluoridated water to prevent tooth decay.
4. Eat a balanced diet and limit sugary drinks and snacks.
5. Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams.

Tooth Decay

Tooth decay (cavities) is the single most prevalent childhood disease. Tooth decay affects nearly 60% of children and causes problems that often last long into adulthood- affecting health, education, employment opportunities and well being.

Untreated tooth decay can cause pain and infection that can lead to problems with nutrition, growth, school readiness and speech problems.

Children in the United States miss hundreds of thousands of school days each year due to toothaches or dental problems.

In addition to brushing, flossing and regular checkups, avoiding snacks that contain sugars and starches can help teeth and gums stay healthy. Instead of soda and other sugary drinks, drink fluoridated water.

Fluoride

Fluoride protects against tooth decay at any age. Water fluoridation is the least expensive method to reduce dental cavities.

What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that is naturally present in all water sources.

What is community water fluoridation?

Community water fluoridation is the controlled adjustment- either increasing or decreasing- and monitoring of fluoride in community drinking water to reach optimal fluoride levels for preventing tooth decay.

Community water fluoridation continues to be the safest, most effective and most economical method for preventing dental decay. Studies prove drinking fluoridated water can reduce tooth decay by 20% to 40% in both children and adults.

In the 1950's, before water fluoridation was common, most people over the age of 65 had lost their teeth. Now, after decades of widespread fluoridation and increased dental health education, more seniors are keeping most or all of their teeth.

People of all ages benefit from drinking water that is optimally fluoridated.

Fluoride is an important mineral for young children. As a child's teeth begin to form, fluoride strengthens the enamel to make it resistant to tooth decay. Later, after teeth are in the mouth, fluoride helps reverse early signs of decay. This is how children benefit from drinking fluoridated water.

