

Fluoride

safe and effective

Fluoride

Tooth decay used to be a fact of life but in recent decades, it has been reduced dramatically. The reason for this decline in cavities is Fluoride. Research shows that Fluoride reduces cavities in both children and adults. It helps to repair early stages of decay even before it becomes visible.

Water Fluoridation

Worldwide, 39 million people consume naturally fluoridated water and another 317 million people consume water with added fluoride. Where fluoride is in insufficient quantities, which is most of Australia, fluoride is added to the water. Melbourne's water supply has been fluoridated since 1973.

Safe and Effective Amounts

At the right amount, one part fluoride to one million parts water, the benefits of fluoride have been seen all over the world. This is especially so in children where it has a strong effect on baby teeth.

It has been proven that the amount of decay decreases with fluoridation and then rises when the fluoridation has been stopped. Adding fluoride to water is the most effective way to fight against tooth decay and it is available to everyone in Melbourne.

Fluorosis

Fluorosis refers to the effect of 'mottling' on the enamel of teeth as they are forming from excessive exposure to fluoride. It can occur naturally in populations where the drinking water is naturally fluoridated at high levels, or in the past, when children were exposed to fluoride in many forms (such as toothpaste and formula). Severe cases are now rare in Australia.

Health Concerns

Like any other nutrient, it is safe and effective when used appropriately. Over 60 years of research around the world has shown fluoride at the optimal level to do no harm to people or the environment.

Forms of Fluoride

Fluoride is obtained by the body in two forms: topical and systemic.

Topical fluorides strengthen teeth already present in the mouth making them more decay – resistant. Topical fluorides include toothpastes, mouth rinses and professionally applied fluoride treatments.

Systemic fluorides are those that are ingested into the body and become incorporated into forming tooth structures. Systemic fluorides can also give topical protection because it is present in saliva, which is continually bathing the teeth. Systemic fluorides include fluoridated water and tablet supplements.

Bottled Water – Are You Missing Out?

With many Australians striving to drink the recommended 8 cups of water every day, many have turned to drinking bottled water.

If bottled water is your main source of drinking water, then you may be missing out on the decay-preventive benefits of fluoride. Some bottled water may not contain the optimal level of fluoride or none at all. The fluoride may have been removed during treatment of the water. Check the label for fluoride content.

To help prevent decay, bottled water should contain 0.7 to 1.2 ppm of fluoride.

Home Water Treatment Systems

As with bottled water, some home treatment systems (reverse osmosis and distillation) may remove fluoride from the water. Check the manual or speak to the manufacturer.

For More Information on Fluoridation

The World Health Organisation www.who.int

National Health and Medical Research Council www.health.gov.au/nhmrc

The Australian Dental Association www.ada.org.au

Melbourne Water www.melbournewater.com.au