

# Facts

## on water fluoridation in Queensland



fluoride



### Tooth decay and fluoride

- 67 per cent of Queensland children have experienced tooth decay by eight years of age.
- Every year, around 2000 pre-schoolers need to be hospitalised for severe dental decay.
- Fluoride is a naturally occurring compound found in water, plants, rocks, soil, air and foods.
- Topping up fluoride levels in water can reduce the risk of dental decay by up to 40 per cent.
- Prior to 2008, only five per cent of Queenslanders had access to fluoridated drinking water while other states and territories have been fluoridated for 30–50 years.
- The Department of Health no longer recommends the routine use of fluoride supplements, as they do not provide the same health benefit as fluoridated water, and may increase the risk of dental fluorosis.

### Safety and cost-effectiveness of water fluoridation

- A recent review found an average of 2.25 less decayed teeth per child in fluoridated areas.
- Numerous studies and reviews have confirmed the effectiveness of water fluoridation in reducing dental decay for the whole population.
- The fluoridation of public water supplies has been practised around the world for more than sixty years; it is acknowledged as one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- A recent national review of water fluoridation found no negative health effects and only a slight increase in dental fluorosis.
- Water fluoridation gives extra protection against tooth decay but a healthy diet, regular brushing and flossing and regular dental check-ups are all essential for good oral health.
- More than 150 major health organisations including the World Health Organization, the Australian Medical Association (AMA), and the Australian Dental Association (ADA) support water fluoridation.



**Every person of every age  
benefits from drinking fluoridated water  
throughout their life. Children benefit as soon as  
their teeth are formed and elderly people  
keep their teeth for longer –  
fluoride reduces their chances  
of developing tooth decay.**

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