

NEWPORT NEWS WATERWORKS FLUORIDE FACT SHEET

DATE: July 2015



BACKGROUND

Fluoride is a slightly altered or ionized form of the chemical element fluorine. Fluoride compounds can be found naturally, in very small amounts, in water and food.

In 1908, a dentist named Dr. Frederick McKay found that fluoride could prevent cavities. He also found that it could also cause tooth discoloration. In 1951, two researchers from Indiana University reported that fluoride prevented tooth decay. The University sold its fluoridation technology to Proctor and Gamble who added fluoride to Crest toothpaste.

In 1962, the U.S. Public Health Service endorsed the practice of adding fluoride to drinking water. Since 1974, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has regulated drinking water through the Safe Drinking Water Act.

In January 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services finalized its recommendation for fluoride in drinking water to be 0.7 mg/L (milligrams per liter). One of the reasons stated is that Americans have more access to fluoride in other products (toothpaste, mouth rinses and mouthwash) than ever before.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Newport News Waterworks adheres to drinking water regulations set by the USEPA and guidance provided by the Virginia Department of Health (the regional VDH Office of Drinking Water is located in Norfolk). Waterworks maintains a fluoride level of about 0.7 mg/L at the plants. This is well within the range set by EPA and in accordance with the recommendations set by the VDH

PLEASE NOTE

- Water fluoridation and fluoride toothpaste are largely responsible for the significant decline in tooth decay in the U.S. over the past several decades.
- Dental fluorosis (discoloration, mottled or spotted teeth) however, can be caused by excess fluoride consumption.
- The American Dental Association (ADA) has been an advocate of fluoridated water for many years. Based on studies and reports, the ADA supports the proposed recommendation to lower the level allowed in drinking water.
- The ADA “Strongly urges communities that already are doing so to continue fluoridating water at the levels the government recommends as safe and optimal.”
- The goal of community fluoridation is to achieve an oral health benefit while minimizing any potential health risks.
- Newport News Waterworks publishes an annual water quality report which includes information on fluoride levels in our water.

Newport News Waterworks Customer Service
(757) 926-1000, Monday – Friday, 8am to 5pm