



Position that the Ontario Government amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to add a regulation mandating the fluoridation of drinking water at the concentration of 0.6 to 0.8 ppm.

September 26, 2014

The Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD) endorses community water fluoridation as a safe and effective public health intervention to reduce dental decay. The Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry calls on the Province of Ontario to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to require fluoridation of all community water systems to the recommended level of 0.6 to 0.8 ppm fluoride. In addition, we call on the province to fund and provide technical support for fluoridation to all municipalities in Ontario.

Research on community water fluoridation is extensive and is continuing. Researchers in many different countries have published their findings in recognized peer-reviewed journals; more than 3,000 studies. These have been assessed and analyzed in systematic reviews and reports that have been produced in a number of different countries; Europe,^{1,2} the United Kingdom,^{3,4} Ireland,⁵ Australia,⁶⁻⁸ the United States^{9a-c, 10-12} and Canada¹³⁻¹⁷. All the reviews and reports confirm the safety and the effectiveness of enhancing the amount of fluoride in community drinking water to optimal levels. In Canada most recently, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec¹⁵ released its report, “Water fluoridation: An analysis of the health benefits and risks.” As well, Health Canada released the “Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality: Guideline Technical Document —Fluoride,”¹⁶ and the Government of Canada its “Joint Government Response to Environmental Petition Number 221: Petition to Discontinue Water Fluoridation.”¹⁷ The major conclusions from all these reviews and reports are:

- Water fluoridation is safe. Research finds no evidence of increased risk of cancer, bone disease, kidney disease, fluoride toxicity, thyroid suppression, birth defects, IQ deficits or any other health adverse health effects.
- The only adverse effect linked to community water fluoridation is the possibility of higher rates of very mild or mild dental fluorosis (barely noticeable to the unaided eye) – if inadvertent ingestion of other fluoride sources (fluoridated toothpaste, fluoride supplements) is not controlled.
- Water fluoridation is still effective against caries (dental cavities) even when other sources of fluoride, e.g. toothpastes, topical fluorides, are used
- Water fluoridation benefits all residents served by community water supplies, regardless of their social or economic status.
- Research finds no evidence that adding fluoride to the drinking water has negative environmental impacts.

In the past 5 years (2008 to 2014) the municipal councils of 17 communities in Ontario voted to continue fluoridating their drinking water (this includes the community of LaSalle which voted to continue fluoridation but their water was supplied by the Windsor water system), with a number of communities having to deal with the issue more than once during this period (Table 1). In this period 15 communities have lost the benefits of fluoridated drinking water through the votes of 9 municipal councils (Table 2). Additionally, in two communities, Orillia and Thunder Bay councils have decided not to

initiate community water fluoridation. An oft-cited reason for discontinuing this important population health measure is the cost involved in maintaining the equipment. Concerns about perceived adverse health effects have not figured largely into these municipal-level decisions.

Jurisdictions that have legislated community water fluoridation at the state, territorial or national level of government, have been shown to be more effective in providing community water fluoridation to their respective municipal populations, with resulting reductions in dental decay. For example California is one of 13 states in the USA¹⁸ that have mandated fluoridation and has increased population coverage from 17% in 1995 to 62.5% in 2011.¹⁹ Similarly, Queensland one of 7 states in Australia which mandate fluoridation increased the number of people who benefit from community water fluoridation from 5% to 86% between the years from 2008 to 2012.²⁰ Countries that have national legislation on community water fluoridation are: Brazil²¹, Hong Kong²², Singapore²³, Ireland²⁴ and Malaysia²⁵.

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Table 1

Ontario Municipalities Maintaining CWF	
Brockville	Council votes to maintain CWF February 11, 2014
Bracebridge	Council votes to maintain CWF January 15, 2014
Gravenhurst	Council votes to maintain CWF December 17, 2013
Muskoka Lakes Township	Council votes to maintain CWF December 13, 2013
Georgian Bay Township	Council votes to maintain CWF November 2013
Cornwall	Council votes to maintain CWF July 09, 2013
Carleton Place	Council votes to maintain CWF June 25, 2013
Lambton Area	Lambton Shores, Point Edward and Warwick voted to maintain CWF May 2013
West Nipissing	Council votes to maintain CWF May 07, 2013
Petrolia	Council voted to maintain CWF May 07, 2012
London	Council voted to maintain CWF May 01, 2012
Halton Region	Council voted to maintain CWF January 12, 2012
Peel Region	Council voted to maintain CWF April 28, 2011
Hamilton	Board of Health voted to maintain CWF April 26, 2011
Toronto	Board of Health voted to maintain CWF April 4, 2011
Norfolk County	Council voted to maintain CWF March 24, 2009
Atikokan	Council voted to maintain CWF Nov. 10, 2008
16 communities	

Table 2

Communities Discontinuing Community Water Fluoridation in Ontario 2008-2014

Community	Health Unit	Year Fluoridation Discontinued
Welland, Pelham, Fonthill, part of Thorold	Niagara Region	2008
Waterloo, St. Jacobs, Elmira	Waterloo Region	2010
Lakeshore	Windsor and Essex County	2011
Amherstburg	Windsor and Essex County	2012
Windsor, LaSalle, Tecumseh	Windsor and Essex County	2013
Tottenham	Simcoe Muskoka	2013
Baysville (Lake of Bays)	Simcoe Muskoka	2014
Huntsville	Simcoe Muskoka	2014
Total 15 communities		
9 councils voted to discontinue		