



BOARD OF HEALTH

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Black Hawk County Board of Health Position Statement on Fluoridation

Fluoridation is one of the ten great public health achievements of the 20th century. The Black Hawk County Board of Health is strongly committed to the fluoridation of community water systems, as it has greatly improved oral health. Fluoridation began nationally over 70 years ago, and the science surrounding it supports the current practice as sound public health policy that preserves the health of our citizens. Today, fluoridation (at 0.7 ppm, according to CDC guidelines) is still the most cost-effective way to prevent dental caries. It is an ideal public health measure that everyone benefits from, whether rich or poor, no matter the age.

National surveys of oral health dating back several decades document the continued benefit of fluoride in decreasing tooth decay in children and adults. It is doubtful that any other public health procedure has undergone more research, epidemiological study, and intense public scrutiny than water fluoridation. In the past few years, systematic reviews of community water fluoridation studies through the Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health in America, CDC's Recommendations for Using Fluoride to Prevent and Control Dental Caries in the United States, and the Oral Health Report issued by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services have all reinforced fluoridation's safety and efficacy in preventing dental decay in both children and adults.

Dental caries in 12 year olds declined 68% in the early years of fluoridation, and children living in communities without a fluoridated water supply have a 32% higher rate of decayed, missing, or filled teeth. Fluoridating water to the optimal level reduces tooth decay by 25% in children and adults. Children living in areas with fluoridated water experience 2.25 fewer decayed teeth compared with those in non-fluoridated communities, resulting in savings from \$28 to \$67 per year per child from reduced dental care costs. Residents with optimally fluoridated water see a \$4.32 to \$27.41 per capita (dependent on size of community) return on each dollar invested.

Along with the overwhelming majority of the world's health care organizations and leaders within the scientific community, the Black Hawk County Board of Health firmly supports the practice of community water fluoridation. The Black Hawk County Board of Health encourages community water systems to fluoridate water at concentrations recommended by the CDC as an economical, safe, and effective means to control the major public health problem of dental caries.

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