

# Talking to policy-makers about community water fluoridation

A conversation guide for oral health advocates

Fluoride has a long history of improving oral health. Water fluoridation accomplishes this at the community level. But access to fluoridated tap water across Texas has fallen in the last decade. Your voice matters. By reaching out to policy-makers and civic leaders, you can help preserve the benefits of water fluoridation for as many Texans as possible.

We've pulled together this brief overview of the benefits of water fluoridation and how you can start the conversation as you advocate for greater oral health in your community.



## Conversation Starters



"At a time like this when the state and local governments are having to make budget cuts, I wish every health program had the return on investment that water fluoridation has."



"Life can be hectic and stressful. Many people put off routine medical and dental care. Fortunately, water fluoridation means that most Texans are getting the preventive benefits of fluoride at home simply by drinking tap water or making other foods or drinks with it."



"Fluoride exists naturally in virtually all water sources. We count on public servants to ensure that communities receive the right amount to prevent tooth decay."



"The leading health and medical voices recommend fluoridation as safe and beneficial, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Dental Association."

## Facts worth sharing

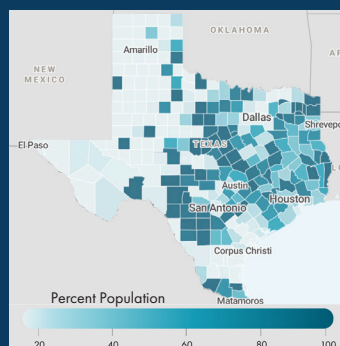
- Drinking fluoridated water reduces tooth decay by 25 percent.
- Each resident of a fluoridated community saves an average of \$32 each year because they are less likely to need to get cavities treated.
- A Texas study showed that the state could save \$24 per year for each child who has access to appropriate levels of fluoridated water.
- Communities of 1,000 or more people see an average estimated return on investment of \$20 for every \$1 spent on water fluoridation.

## Research Spotlight

A study in Juneau, Alaska, compared children's oral health before and after the city stopped adding fluoride to its water in 2007. Treatments for tooth decay increased between 25 and 75 percent after fluoridation ceased. The most significant negative effects were on the children born after the city stopped fluoridating its water. [Source: BMC Oral Health, December 2018]

## Where does your community stand?

This map shows the percentage of each county's population that lacks access to water with fluoride. The lighter shades of blue mean more people are able to benefit from water fluoridation in those communities. Is your county doing all it can to improve community oral health and save taxpayer dollars?



Want to learn more about how to advocate for water fluoridation in your community?

[www.fluoridefortexas.org](http://www.fluoridefortexas.org)



Are you hearing talk in your community about ending water fluoridation? Get in touch.

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