



NEWPORT NEWS WATERWORKS FLUORIDE FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

Fluoride is a form of the chemical element fluorine. Fluoride compounds are found naturally in very small amounts in both water and food.

In 1908, a dentist found that fluoride could prevent cavities. He found that it could cause tooth discoloration as well. In 1951, two researchers from Indiana University reported that fluoride prevented tooth decay. The University sold its fluoridation technology to Procter and Gamble who added fluoride to its 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. The current acceptable range for fluoride in drinking water is 0.7 to 1.2 milligrams per liter (mg/L) and it is regulated to not exceed 4 milligrams per liter.

In January 2011, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services proposed that the recommended level of fluoride in drinking water be lowered to an optimum level of 0.7 mg/L. 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 Virginia Beach).

Waterworks now maintains a fluoride level of about 0.9 mg/L at the plants. This is well within the range set by EPA and in accordance with the recommendation of 0.9 mg/L set by the VDH.

The proposed recommendation to lower the fluoride level is being studied nationally and locally. As of yet, the VDH has not altered its recommendation of 0.9 mg/L to Virginia water utilities. If and when they do, Waterworks will immediately comply with its recommendation.



For more information call Waterworks
Customer Service at (757) 926-1000
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PLEASE NOTE

- Water fluoridation and fluoride toothpaste are largely responsible for the significant decline in tooth decay in the U.S. over recent 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. The annual report is included with your April/May water bill and can be found on our web site at www.nngov.com/waterworks.