**End water fluoridation? Doing so would backfire, harming health and quality of life**

* **The Problem:** Tooth decay (cavities) is the [most common chronic disease](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/oral-conditions___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjRiMTg6Y2M4NDhjZWU1NWU0M2IwMTRkODk4ODM4MDBlODhjMjY4NjNlYWE5NGYwZjgyOGU1YzJlNDEyNjVkNzJlYzAzNDpwOlQ6Rg) for adults and children in the United States. Its impact goes beyond the mouth, disrupting people’s lives and opportunities:
* Each year, children lose a total of [34 million hours of school time](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.aapd.org/globalassets/naaval-school-days-lost-2018.pdf___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjkwZDY6NmMwYTEyOTQ2MTZkODk0MWIxOGUyYTI5ZDc5YWQwNDUwMmQzNmY5Mjc3NjFjODNmMGVlMTRhYWMxZjYxY2UwNzpwOlQ6Rg) due to emergency or unplanned dental treatments.
* The U.S. economy [loses over $45 billion in productivity](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/fast-facts/index.html___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjRlZWU6MjY4MTcyNGJlN2E5YWUzNzM5MmQ0NzAwODBjZTJlM2RjOTI4OTU3M2Q4YmI0MDY4YmQyNTljNzhjNzc3ZTljZDpwOlQ6Rg) each year because of untreated dental disease.
* **A Proven Approach:** Fluoride is one of the best tools for preventing decay. Fluoride is [a mineral that exists naturally](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Fluoride-Consumer/___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OmNiZmY6ZjhlNzJiM2RkOTVlMjVkODg0YzNmZTkzYjMxZGExZmNmYzlhZWNkMGFkNjI4MjA0NjRjOGYxYjA0YWY3ZDU5ZjpwOlQ6Rg) in lakes, rivers, groundwater and even the oceans. However, most water supplies do not contain enough fluoride to prevent decay. When drinking water has the recommended amount of fluoride, it strengthens the tooth enamel and [reduces cavities in adults and children by 25%](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/about/statement-on-the-evidence-supporting-the-safety-and-effectiveness-of-community-water-fluoridation.html___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OmVhNWU6MGQ3Y2VmZjRlNDZkNjAxZGYxNTVjZGRiNjljZWQxZmU5OGM5NTBlODQxMjllNTczN2U2MmU2ZGRhYjIzYTJhNTpwOlQ6Rg). Fluoride in water and in toothpaste [work in complementary ways](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/faq/___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjFhMGI6ZGM3YjZkZjFmYmVhZjE5YzlkOTAyYzQzMjU1OWNmZWY4ZjE4MGE1ZDE4ODRhZGQ3MTNjODA1MzM2YjUxNGJmOTpwOlQ6Rg) — like seatbelts and air bags in a car.
* **A Widely Accepted Strategy:** [63% of U.S. residents](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/php/statistics/2022-water-fluoridation-statistics.html___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OmQ0NjM6YjRiYzBkZjg1YWUxNWVmOTc1NWQ0OTBjZGY0MzlmZTBiNmNkM2YwYzkwMTMzNjZjNzcyN2U1YjUyMDY4N2I1YTpwOlQ6Rg) have access to drinking water that is fluoridated. Some water systems have enough natural fluoride to reach the recommended level. In most cases, the local water system adds more fluoride to reach the recommended level: 0.7 milligrams per liter.
* **Supported by Health Leaders:** The leading health, dental and medical experts agree that water fluoridation is a safe approach to keep communities healthy. [These experts include](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//ilikemyteeth.org/debate-fluoridation/health-experts-on-fluoride/___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjlhYTI6NjY4YjIzYmJmZWM2M2U5ZWUxMTQ4MWE4NTFkNjU4N2Q0ZjcyMGViYzg1ZjM0ZTVlOGE2NjVjMGRkODhiZWI4YzpwOlQ6Rg) the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Dental Association, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
* **Fluoridation Saves Money:** Research shows that a fluoridated community saves [an average of $32.19](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2016.0881___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2Ojk3MjY6ZmQ2YTdhNmZiZGY4NWQ2YjNiMGI2YTU5MzU0ZTk3ODdlZjMyZWJjMmI1NWY2YTMwZDE2YjNhNmVjMTMxZWVlNzpwOlQ6Rg) *per person, per year*. Studies in [Texas](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//txohc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Fluoridation_Savings_TX_Study.May2000.pdf___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjAyZDA6M2I2YmJjNDJlYWVjYWQ0MGM3NmM1NWI0MjAxZDcwZGFmYjdiZDAyNmExNzNjMDk2Zjg0ZjU5MmUyOTM2ODE2NjpwOlQ6Rg) and [Louisiana](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4834a2.htm___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjVhOTk6ZDQyNGQ2NGJmMzRkMTdlOTNkOWQ4NjcyMWNlYWNmM2I2OWUyYmNkMTljNzg4ODNlYzdlNWQ5OTI2ZWUyYzdjODpwOlQ6Rg) show that fluoridation curbs the cost of state Medicaid programs by reducing the need to treat dental disease.
* **The Facts about Safety:** Some people question the safety of fluoride, and their main concern is cognitive deficits. Specifically, they point to a report by the National Toxicology Program (NTP) linking fluoride with IQ scores. But consider these key points.
* Most of the studies that NTP reviewed were conducted in China, India or other countries where the natural levels of fluoride are far higher than the levels in fluoridated water in the U.S.
* The National Academies of Sciences reviewed drafts of NTP’s report and said the report [did not provide enough evidence](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.nationalacademies.org/news/2020/03/national-academies-completes-review-of-national-toxicology-programs-draft-monograph-on-fluoride-and-neurodevelopmental-and-cognitive-effects___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OmNjMjk6ZTAxMTViYzBiMmRmMWYzYjFjZDZjYjY1OTkzMWU4ZTc0OWMyZGQxOGQ2Y2FiZmVjMGY5ODZiNTIyMDNlMDhiZjpwOlQ6Rg) to support its claims. The National Academies also wrote that nothing in the report cast doubt on the safety of *low levels* of fluoride such as fluoridated water.
* [The NTP itself said](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//ntp.niehs.nih.gov/whatwestudy/assessments/noncancer/completed/fluoride___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OmI3NDM6ZDQ1ZjJhY2VjMmM0YmVlYjkyMTRjMjgwMTgyMWU5MTJiMWIzMTUyMDE1OTU5YzIwMWFmYzJjNjNkMjZlMDQwYTpwOlQ6Rg) that its report “was not designed” to evaluate the effects of fluoridated water.

Studies from [Australia](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36214232/___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjBjZDA6NDZiZWRkZmUxOGUwNmVmYzUxNDVkZmZhZTRiNzIyOTUzZTEyM2FmZGMzMmRiMGM2MDMyZGYwNTM4ZmIzMDVmMjpwOlQ6Rg), [New Zealand](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24832151/___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2Ojg0NTE6MWRmODI3ODc3Y2E5ZTZjMDRmNGI5ODhmNTYzMmM5NzcxYWI4ZTY0OWMyY2JjNzg1NzkwZGEzZDA3MWMwNWUwYzpwOlQ6Rg) and [Spain](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34627799/___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjljMGE6M2RhNjZkNjI4NjY5YWYwOGI0YzQzZTg5YWJjNjQ5NWFjNTkyMGE0NDRjNWZmZGQ4MWVlMDNkY2YyOGI4MWM4YTpwOlQ6Rg) show no link between fluoride exposure and cognitive deficits. Unlike other studies, the New Zealand study was enhanced by testing IQs several times over a 31-year period.

* **When Fluoridation Ends, Tooth Decay Rises:** Researchers have learned what happens when a city ends fluoridation. Two large Canadian cities have learned this lesson the hard way:
	+ Calgary, one of the largest cities in Canada, stopped fluoridation in 2011. Several years later, [the cavity rate rose well above](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//ucalgary.ca/news/study-shows-tooth-decay-worsened-calgary-children-after-fluoride-removal___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjY3Yjg6OGY2Y2Y2ODIwNWNjZjdlNDI0N2EyZTU5ZGViNDliMmVlMjBhZWJkYzhiNTViN2ZiNDc4YjVkMjE1NjAyMDJhMDpwOlQ6Rg) the rate in another city where the water was still fluoridated. This disturbing discovery led the Calgary city council to [vote for resuming fluoridation](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//globalnews.ca/news/8374757/calgary-reintroduce-fluoride-water-city-council-vote/___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjA5NzY6MWE0MmU1MWQwZjdkNGI1ZTVhNmYwOTgzZDNhNzZkYzI3MzI4MTUyNTFkNDI2MzEyODQ0YzQyNTJhOWJkZDg2MDpwOlQ6Rg).
	+ Windsor, Ontario stopped water fluoridation in 2013. Five years later, [the city council reversed its decision](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/windsor-council-water-fluoride-1.4947723___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OmNhZjc6N2I1MDBmZmY1MGE4OTE2MzQyZDJjN2EzY2M2OWY4OGY5Y2ZkMTgwMjU3ZTA5MjQzN2NmYzViOTYyYjhiODA2ODpwOlQ6Rg) after hearing testimony that the number of children needing urgent dental treatment had soared by 51%.

Fluoridation is one of the few forms of prevention that *every person* *in a community* benefits from. It is not “replaced” by preventive dental care. Why? Because [68 million Americans](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.carequest.org/topics/access-to-care___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjhiYjQ6MGExZDMzZTVjMjZkNThjNDMxMGJjNDNlOGFmN2I3ODk4ZWM1MTYzNjcyYjAyMDkzNWZkNmE0NjA1MTM1ZjA4NTpwOlQ6Rg) lack dental insurance, and [56 million Americans](https://url.avanan.click/v2/___https%3A//www.carequest.org/topics/access-to-care___.YXAzOnNjb3R0c21pbGVzOmE6bzo2MzI0NGM5MTBmOWVmY2M1YjU1MDM3OTVmNGQ2NzBjMzo2OjhiYjQ6MGExZDMzZTVjMjZkNThjNDMxMGJjNDNlOGFmN2I3ODk4ZWM1MTYzNjcyYjAyMDkzNWZkNmE0NjA1MTM1ZjA4NTpwOlQ6Rg) live in areas with a shortage of dental providers.