



Charlie Crist  
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary of Health

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**Department of Health Response to the American Dental Association's Interim Guidance on Infant Formula and Fluoride**

On November 8, 2006, the American Dental Association (ADA) issued interim guidance for parents and professionals on fluoride intake with infant formula associated with fluorosis of the teeth.

The Florida Department of Health agrees with the current scientific evidence that water fluoridation is safe and effective. To date, no scientific literature has shown any causal relationship between fluoridation and any disease. However, while mixing formula with fluoridated water poses no known health risks, mixing may increase the risk of very mild to mild fluorosis. Parents should speak with their child's health care provider to make the best decision on whether their child's formula should be mixed with fluoridated water.

The link to the ADA's interim guidance is:

[http://www.ada.org/prof/resources/positions/statements/fluoride\\_infants.asp](http://www.ada.org/prof/resources/positions/statements/fluoride_infants.asp).

The ADA's statements included the following: "enamel fluorosis is not a disease but rather affects the way that teeth look. Most cases of fluorosis result in faint white lines or streaks on tooth enamel that are not readily apparent to the affected individual or the casual observer." The ADA also states "While more research is needed before definitive recommendations can be made on fluoride intake by bottle-fed infants, the ADA issues this interim guidance because we know that parents and other caregivers are understandably cautious about what is best for their children." The ADA continues to support community water fluoridation as "the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay."

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have issued information on infant formula and the risk for enamel fluorosis. Several key statements include:

- Water fluoridated at a level optimal for oral health poses no known health risks for infants. CDC believes that community water fluoridation is safe and healthy and promotes its use for people of all ages.
- Children today are at no greater risk of developing enamel fluorosis from infant formula mixed with fluoridated water than children in previous generations.
- Recent evidence suggests that reconstituted formula mixed with fluoridated water on a regular basis may increase the chance of a child developing very mild or mild enamel fluorosis, which is barely noticeable, if noticed at all. Studies have not shown that teeth are likely to develop more esthetically noticeable forms of fluorosis, even with regular mixing of formula with fluoridated water.
- Parents and caregivers of infants who are concerned about the effect that mixing their infant's formula with fluoridated water may have in developing enamel fluorosis can lessen this exposure by mixing formula with low fluoride water most or all the time.

The CDC guidance can be found at [http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/safety/infant\\_formula.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/safety/infant_formula.htm).