

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Celeste Philip, MD, MPH**  
Surgeon General and Secretary

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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## POLICY STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

The Florida Department of Health is strongly committed to the fluoridation of community water systems. Oral health is vitally important to overall health and well-being. Research has shown associations between poor oral health and diabetes, heart and lung diseases, stroke, low birth weight, and premature births. Fluoridation began nationally more than 70 years ago and the Florida State Board of Health officially endorsed fluoridation in 1949. Strong support and active promotion of the measure as a safe, economical and effective means of reducing tooth decay has continued. In 1999, the CDC recognized water fluoridation as one of the 10 great public health achievements of the twentieth century.

Today, fluoridation is still the most cost-effective way to prevent dental cavities. For every \$1 dollar invested in water fluoridation, \$38 dollars are saved in averted dental treatment costs. It is an ideal public health measure where everyone benefits, whether rich or poor, no matter the age, without requiring any conscious effort of the individual. Beginning in Gainesville in 1949, Florida cities have embraced the concept of fluoridation for their residents. Approximately 14.9 million people are currently benefiting from fluoridation in Florida. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated in 2014 more than 214 million people in the United States received the benefits from water containing fluoride at the recommended level for controlling dental decay.

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. 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*, the *Updated Oral Health Report* issued by the Community Preventive Services Task Force, and the *U.S. Public Health Service Recommendation for Fluoride Concentration in Drinking Water for the Prevention of Dental Caries* have all reinforced the safety and efficacy of fluoridation in preventing dental decay in both children and adults.

Along with the overwhelming majority of the world's health care organizations and leaders within the scientific community, the Florida Department of Health firmly supports and continues to recommend community water fluoridation as the most economical and effective means to control the major public health problem of dental caries.

Sincerely,

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH  
Surgeon General and Secretary