

COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

“One of 10
Great Public
Health
Achievements
of the 20th
Century.”

CDC - 2005



COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION



- ⦿ **Overview**
- ⦿ **Safe, Effective, Inexpensive**
- ⦿ **Alabama's Program**
- ⦿ **21st Century Challenges**
- ⦿ **FAQ's**

WHAT IS COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION?

**“Nature’s
Way
To
Prevent
Tooth
Decay”**

- ① **Fluoride is a natural element found in rocks and soil everywhere.**
- ① **Fluoridation consists of adjusting the fluoride in water supplies to an optimal level that will prevent tooth decay. The optimal level for preventing tooth decay is a range from 0.7 to 1.2 parts per million.**
- ① **Over 405 million people in approximately 60 countries enjoy the benefits of optimally fluoridated water.**
- ① **In the U.S., over 72% of the population served by community water systems benefit from fluoridation.**

**First Public
Water System
to Fluoridate:
Grand Rapids,
Michigan 1945**

65 YEARS OF FLUORIDATION



**First city to
fluoridate in
Alabama:
Northport, AL
1951**

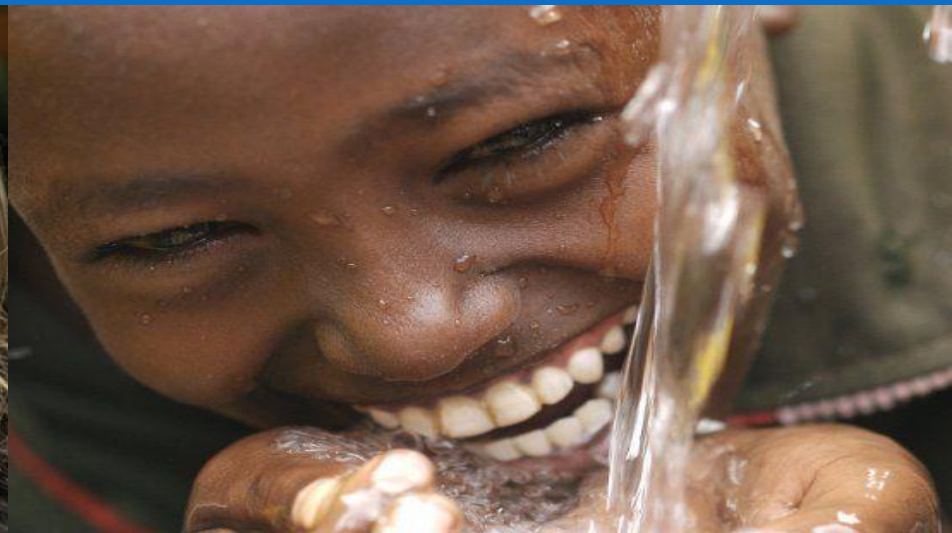
- “Colorado Brown Stain” observed by dentists.
- Theory – the stain was linked to the public water supply.
- Dentists also observed resistance to dental decay in same patients.
- Studies revealed high a fluoride concentration in the drinking water.
- 1930s - years of research confirmed oral health benefits of fluoride.
- 1945 - fluoridation began and decay rates declined significantly.

HOW SAFE IS FLUORIDATION?



- ① **More than 60 years of research and experience indicate it's safe for humans and environment at optimal levels.**
- ① **Supported by hundreds of organizations, leading scientists, health professionals, and governments around the world.**
- ① **The US Public Health Service recommends fluoridation as a means of preventing dental decay.**
- ① **The CDC works with state and local health departments and water districts to help ensure its safety and effectiveness.**

**WE KEEP IT SAFE FOR
THEM!**



HOW BENEFICIAL IS FLUORIDE?

- ① Fluoride can stop or reverse the decay process.
- ① Fluoride can strengthen tooth enamel systemically prior to eruption.
- ① Best results occur from frequent exposure to fluoride and fluoride-rich saliva, which results from consuming fluoridated water.
- ① Past studies have shown that fluoridation can reduce dental decay in children's as much as 60%.
- ① Today, even with the widespread use of fluoride toothpaste, mouth rinse, and professional treatments, fluoridation has been shown to reduce tooth decay by up to 40% in children and nearly 35% among adults.
- ① Fluoridation benefits the entire community regardless of age, race, income or education level.
- ① Fluoridation is especially beneficial to vulnerable populations who do not access regular dental care and lack resources for supplemental fluorides.





THE COST IS WELL WORTH THE INVESTMENT



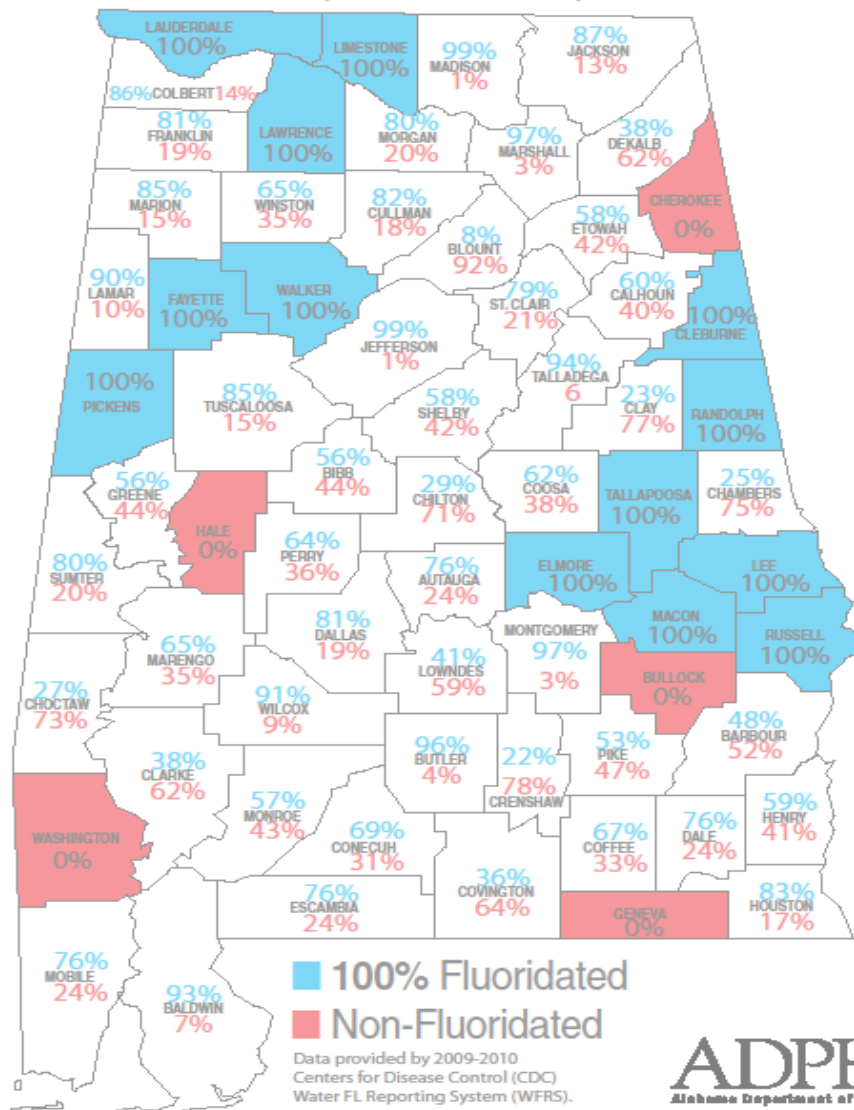
- ⦿ The average cost to fluoridate is estimated to range from \$.62 a year per person in large communities to \$3.90 a year per person in small communities.
- ⦿ Over a lifespan, this is typically less than the cost of one dental filling.
- ⦿ For most cities, every \$1 invested in fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs.
- ⦿ Everyone pays the cost for treating dental disease, not just those who need treatment. All of us pay through higher health insurance premiums and higher taxes.

ALABAMA'S FLUORIDATION PROGRAM

- ◎ **Currently, 123 water systems are fluoridating statewide**
- ◎ **10 water systems have natural fluoride levels within the optimal range (.7 – 1.2 ppm).**
- ◎ **82.9% of Alabamians enjoy the benefits of fluoridated water regardless of age, race, income or education.**
- ◎ **87 Alabama systems will be recognized by the CDC with Fluoridation Quality Awards for maintaining optimal fluoride levels 12 consecutive months in a calendar year (2009).**
- ◎ **4 Alabama water systems have been fluoridating for 50 or more consecutive years – a remarkable accomplishment.**



Fluoridated & Non-Fluoridated Public Water Systems in AL by Counties



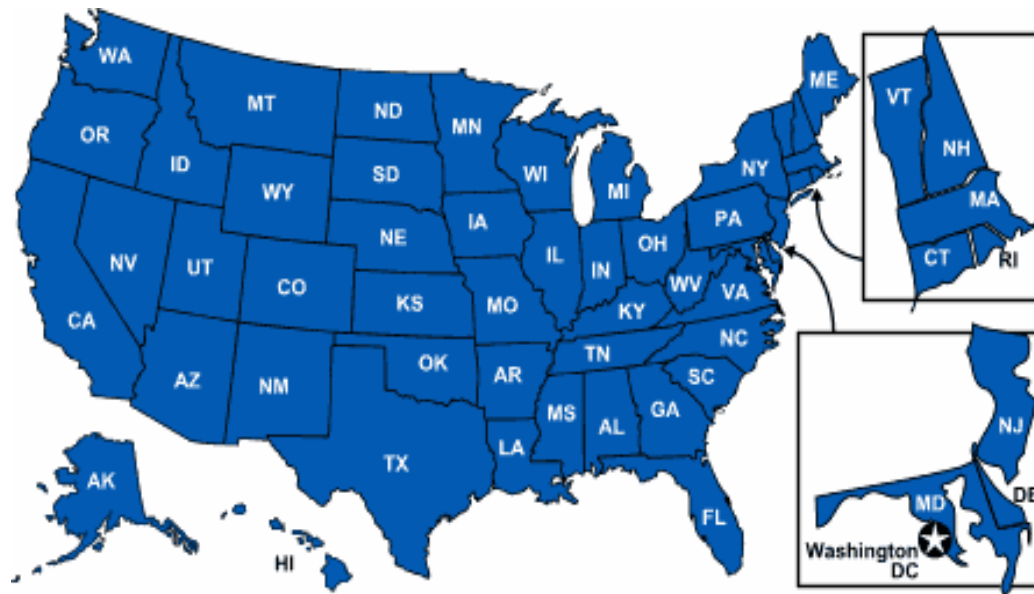
CDC-FluoridatedMap2009-2010

TO DETERMINE IF YOUR WATER SYSTEM FLUORIDATES...

Go to the CDC website: [cdc.gov/fluoridation](https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation).

Click on “My Waters Fluoride” link.

All AL systems are listed by county and name of system.



21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES

The most critical fluoridation challenge that we face today is maintaining our current percentage of population on fluoridated water. During the past decade, 27 systems have discontinued fluoridating for various reasons. Nine of those have resumed, while 18 have not.



ADDRESSING OUR CHALLENGES



- ③ Collaborate with all key oral health partners to pursue new state legislation mandating fluoridation.
- ③ Partner with ADEM to develop new policy/rules to prevent discontinuing fluoridation without an adequate waiting period and proper notification to the public.
- ③ Seek funding opportunities for systems needing new equipment, upgrades and supplies.
- ③ Develop new promotional and recognition campaigns.
- ③ Assure the public that not all fluoridation information circulating is credible and based on scientific studies.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Who regulates community water fluoridation?

A: The AL Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) is the regulatory agency. ADPH staff monitors, promotes and offers technical assistance.

Q: How can systems just decide to no longer fluoridate?

A: Unless they began fluoridating through a referendum, they can discontinue when desired since there is no legislation requiring fluoridation.

Q: Are systems required to notify ADEM, ADPH and the public when they decide to discontinue?

A: Yes, they are required to notify ADEM, ADPH and provide a written notice to the public. Frequently the notice is a small statement in the back pages of the newspaper, thus local citizens are often unaware that fluoridation has ceased.

Q: What does ADEM or ADPH do once a system decides to discontinue fluoridating?

A: The ADPH state fluoridation coordinator contacts the water system manager or board through email, letter, phone calls, etc. to offer technical assistance. Staff also strive to meet with the Water Board to encourage resuming fluoridation as soon as possible. When funding is the issue – ADPH strives to link the systems with the limited resources available.





FAQs CONTINUED

Q: Is a waiting period required before systems can discontinue fluoridating?

A: No, however, the ADPH staff is currently working toward achieving that goal with new policy or rule development. A 90 – 180 day waiting period would be ideal.

Q: How can ADPH and ADEM assure that the public has been appropriately notified of a systems decision to discontinue?

A: This will be included in new policy or rule development through the State Committee of Public Health and supported by ADEM. New rules should require that the notice VERY PUBLIC and also give local citizens an opportunity to comment and contact their local water boards.

Q: Are educational materials on the benefits and cost effectiveness of fluoridation available or provided to water systems?

A: Yes, the ADPH continues to develop and distribute such materials. Staff is also developing new promotional material and media campaigns to share with local, area and state partners. The Council on Dental Health, State Committee of Public Health, will also be working with Dr. Donald Williamson, State Health Officer, and Oral Health staff to address new CWF promotional initiatives.

FLUORIDATION WORKS! THERE'S LIVING PROOF...

Throughout
the 65 years
of water
fluoridation,
every new
generation
has
experienced
improved
oral health.



AND OUR FRIENDS ENJOY THE BENEFITS TOO!



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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