



UNDERSTANDING THE PERSPECTIVES OF CONSUMERS, HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND WATER OPERATORS ON WATER FLUORIDATION

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The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

COMMUNICATIONS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

HAGER SHARP

BRIEF HISTORY

- Hager Sharp contract with CDC
 - Conducted formative research
 - Developed materials
 - Made recommendations about future efforts



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT METHODS



HOW

IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

FLUORIDE
FROM THE WATER
IS ABSORBED
THROUGH THE
STOMACH



MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

- In-Person Consumer Focus Groups
 - Two groups in two cities (Wichita & Dallas)
- In-Depth Phone Interviews with Health Care Providers/Water Operators
 - Pediatricians/pediatric nurse practitioners/pediatric physician assistant
 - Practicing dentists
 - Water engineers/operators

GOALS

- Review/rank messages (words on paper)
- Review/rank creative concepts (images and words)
- Gather additional information on knowledge, beliefs, and message channels



CONSUMERS

KNOWLEDGE & BELIEFS

- Basic facts about fluoride, its safety and its benefits are unclear to the general public
- The majority of respondents challenge the safety of CWF due to lack of knowledge from a trusted source; several asked about “side effects” and the cost they incur
- In communities where CWF is an issue or was on the ballot, there was “confusion” about actual facts perhaps a result of so many discussions from both proponents and opponents

MESSAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use data and facts to prove that water fluoridation is safe and effective; specifically address the issue of “side effects”
- Explain what fluoride is (a mineral)
- Address concerns about cost (to consumer) of fluoridating water
- Include specific facts about the benefits of water fluoridation and “who” has reviewed it
- Show that it has been around for along time, but do not claim it has been the only reason people no longer have dentures or lose teeth

MESSAGING RECOMMENDATIONS



- Simple to understand
- Feature the benefits of CWF
- Use “kitchen table” conversation
- Incorporate the long-standing history of water fluoridation

NEARLY 70 YEARS

- For nearly 70 years, people in the United States have benefited from drinking water with fluoride leading to better overall dental health.
 - Appealing, engaging
 - Reinforces longevity and safety
 - Informative



BUILDING BLOCKS

- Water with fluoride builds a foundation for healthy teeth.
 - Concise, simple
 - Visual is easy to understand

**WATER WITH FLUORIDE
BUILDS A FOUNDATION
FOR HEALTHY TEETH**



Brush with fluoride toothpaste.

Visit the dentist regularly.

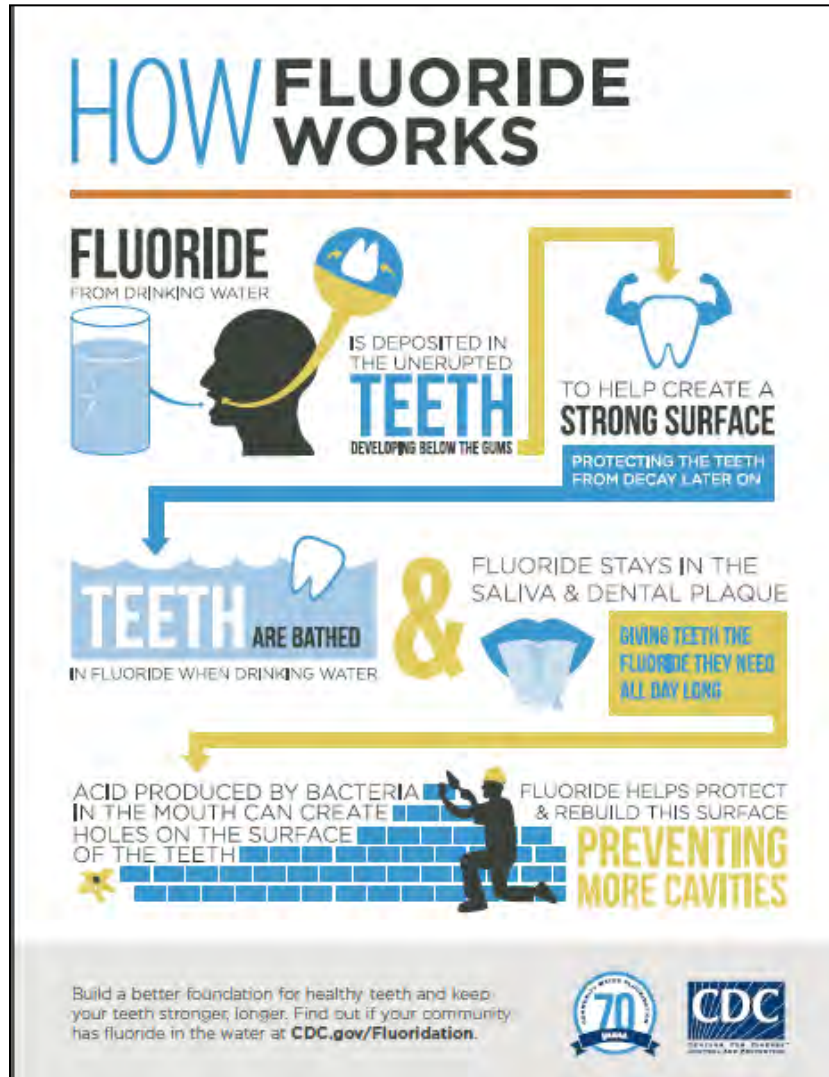
Drink water with fluoride.

Water with fluoride provides the building blocks to good oral health by strengthening teeth throughout our lives.

Build a better foundation for healthy teeth and keep your teeth stronger, longer. Find out if your community has fluoride in the water at [CDC.gov/Fluoridation](https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation).

INFOGRAPHIC



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HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

KNOWLEDGE & BELIEFS

- Recognize the importance of fluoride
- Believe it is safe and effective
- Talk to patients about its importance
 - Pediatric practices: when child is 6 months old, then at wellness checks, continued discussion depends on if water is fluoridated
 - Dentists: 5-10 percent of the time, more likely if patient is a child or patient has a child/children
- Do not have existing patient educational resources; open to them

PEDIATRIC HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

- Preferred Theme 3: “Life is Better with Teeth”
 - Amusing and simple
 - Good for younger patients
 - Informative in a light-hearted manner
 - One suggested “Life is better with *healthy* teeth”
 - “25 percent less tooth decay” should be THE priority message
 - Believe people know what fluoride is and does
 - Only audience to like this message the best

THREE REASONS
LIFE IS BETTER WITH TEETH

1. EATING.
Teeth help us chew.

2. SPEAKING.
Teeth help us communicate.

3. SMILING.
Teeth help us show how we feel.

Without fluoridated water, life would be different. And expensive. And painful. And toothless. Seventy years ago, before adding fluoride to water, about half of the adult population lost all of its teeth. Today, that number is down to 20%. Even when using fluoride toothpaste, drinking water with fluoride reduces tooth decay by about 25% over a person's lifetime. Fluoride is a mineral that is proven to prevent cavities. And good oral health — a mouth and teeth without cavities or other problems — is an important part of good overall health.

Without teeth, you couldn't smile about this fantastic news. Or say, "Yippeee!" or "Yaboo!" Life is better with teeth.
CDC.gov/Fluoridation.

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DENTISTS

- Preferred Theme 2: “Nearly 70 Years”
 - Liked the historical timeframe it showed
 - Liked reference to “10 great public health achievements”
 - Concerned about attributing loss of teeth to water fluoridation only
 - Requested references for research
 - Recommending show the difference in tooth decay between communities with and without fluoridated water
 - Consumers and water operators also preferred this theme

HN.
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YOU'VE
TECTING
YEARS.



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e United States
ealth by adding
inking water.

duces
25%

WATER OPERATORS

KNOWLEDGE & BELIEFS

- Familiar with CWF, but not all agree with it
- Do not believe fluoride is difficult to add; believe it is difficult to work with
- Do not believe fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral based on how they interact with it
- Do not have good resources for themselves or citizen inquiries

MESSAGES

- Preferred Theme 2: “Nearly 70 Years”
 - Easy-to-understand
 - Liked reference to the decrease in teeth loss, but did not agree that it should be attributed to water fluoridation only
 - Liked direct link to CDC web site but suggested saying “learn more about how fluoride in water helps **keep** everyone’s teeth **healthy.**”

“This is John”

- “This is why I do what I do”
- Liked image of child; starting good oral health early
- Suggested including grandfather or diverse children



**THIS IS JOHN.
YOU DON'T KNOW
HIM, BUT YOU'VE
BEEN PROTECTING
HIM FOR YEARS.**

For nearly 70 years, water operators have helped people in the United States improve overall dental health by adding fluoride to community drinking water.

Preventing Cavities:
Water with fluoride reduces tooth decay by about 25% over a person's lifetime.

Long-term Benefits:
Having fluoride in your community's water is safe, benefits everyone, and saves money in dental treatment costs.

We can't stop now. Approximately 75% of people in the United States have access to drinking water with fluoride. That's not enough. Let's continue the momentum and help those without access to water with fluoride get the benefits they deserve.

For more information visit cdc.gov/engineering

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MESSAGES

- Theme 4: “New Recommendation”
 - Understood main message about fluoride level of 0.7 mg/l
 - Too technical for the public, good for them
 - Need a succinct and clear answer to “why is the level being changed?”
 - Clearly define which scientists have reviewed information
 - Do not include fluorosis in the messaging
 - Would be helpful in workplace
 - Believed people in their community would care



RESULTS

MATERIALS

- Partner/
Community Toolkit
 - Fact sheets
 - Posters (HCP,
water operators)
 - Infographic
 - Web badge
 - Support
statements
- Speaker's Toolkit
 - PowerPoint slides
 - Assessment
worksheet
 - Resource list
 - Key messages

WATER WITH FLUORIDE BUILDS A FOUNDATION FOR HEALTHY TEETH.



Brush with
fluoride
toothpaste.



Visit
the dentist
regularly.



Drink
water with
fluoride.

Fluoride in water. 70 years and going strong.
At a faucet near you.

www.cdc.gov/fluoridation



COMMUNICATIONS TH

SMILE, BECAUSE YOU CAN.



For 70 years, people in the United States have enjoyed the
benefits of drinking water with fluoride.

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COMMUNICATIONS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

HAGER SHARP

THIS IS JOHN & JOE. YOU DON'T KNOW THEM, BUT YOU'VE BEEN PROTECTING THEM FOR YEARS.

THANK YOU.

For 70 years, you have helped people in the United States improve their dental health by adding fluoride to community drinking water.

Prevents Cavities:

Water with fluoride reduces cavities by about 25 percent over a person's lifetime.

Benefits the Community:

Having fluoride in your community's water is safe, helps everyone have stronger teeth, and saves money in dental treatment costs.

Thank you for providing this valuable service.
70 years and still going strong.



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QUESTIONS