

FLUORIDATION

Frequently Asked Questions



What is water fluoridation?

Beginning October 2007, water received from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) via West Basin Municipal Water District will be fluoridated. Water fluoridation is where fluoride is added to tap water to levels that will reduce tooth decay. Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral in groundwater, rivers, lakes and streams found to be beneficial for teeth in the 1930s when scientists discovered very low tooth decay rates in people who consumed water containing significant levels of fluoride.

What are the benefits of fluoridated water?

More than 50 years of scientific research indicate that people consuming water with fluoride have healthier teeth and fewer cavities, resulting in lower dental health care costs.

Community water fluoridation is supported by major medical organizations:

- American Medical Association (AMA)
- American Dental Association (ADA)
- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
- Centers For Disease Control (CDC)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Is fluoridated water harmful to me?

No, fluoridated water is not harmful in the concentration required for improved dental health. The concentration of fluoride in your water will be well below the limit set by the California Department of Health Services and Environmental Protection Agency.

Is fluoridated water harmful to my lawn or pets?

No, research shows that fluoridated water is not harmful to human or pet health, gardens or agricultural crops.

Who is required to fluoridate?

In California, a regulation was passed in 1995 by the state legislature requiring large public water systems to fluoridate their water if outside funding is found. Cities are not required to pay for fluoridation.

West Basin customers that fall under the 1995 regulation are:

- Manhattan Beach
- Inglewood
- Golden State Water Co. – Southwest Division (covering Gardena, Lawndale, portions of Hawthorne and unincorporated Los Angeles County)
- California Water Service Co. – Dominguez Division (covering portions of Torrance)
- California Water Service Co. – Hermosa-Redondo Division (covering Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach and portions of Torrance)
- California Water Service Co. – Palos Verdes Division (covering Rancho Palos Verdes, Palos Verdes Estates, Rolling Hills Estates, Rolling Hills and unincorporated Los Angeles County)
- California Water Service Co. – Hawthorne Division (covering portions of Hawthorne)

Does my city fluoridate the water?

Beginning October 2007, water received from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) via West Basin will be fluoridated. At that time, all cities in the West Basin service area will receive fluoridated water:

These cities include Carson, Culver City, El Segundo, Gardena, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lomita, Malibu, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, West Hollywood and portions of Torrance and unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Cities that blend this water with groundwater will have lower levels of fluoride in their water.

Do other cities fluoridate their water?

Yes. Forty-three large cities across the U.S. fluoridate their drinking water. Many Southern California cities and water suppliers already fluoridate water, including Los Angeles, Long Beach, Beverly Hills and Huntington Beach.

What is the cost to you?

Because MWD is fluoridating its entire system, there is virtually no cost to you. MWD estimates the cost to be \$1.75 per acre-foot, which is enough water to provide for two families for a year. Individual water retailers can adjust their rates to cover operational costs.

What if I am concerned about fluoride in my water?

There is no reason to be concerned about the fluoride in your water. At the low levels that will be added to your water, the fluoride is not harmful and provides dental health benefits. However, if you do not want to receive those benefits, many residential water treatment devices, including reverse osmosis units, remove fluoride from tap water.

Where can I get more information on tap water fluoridation?

Please contact your local water company or city's water department for specific details regarding fluoridated tap water coming to your home later this year.

MWD contact number: (213) 217-5709

These web sites also have information on community water fluoridation:

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/cdic/cdcb/medicine/oralhealth/fluoride/index.htm>

http://www.mwdh2o.com/mwdh2o/pages/news/press_releases/2003-02/fluoridation.htm

