COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) and Health

Optimal oral health is an important component of overall health and physical, psychological and social wellbeing.

- International evidence demonstrates that community water fluoridation is highly effective for reducing tooth decay in the population.\(^1\) In New Zealand, CWF decreases the severity and prevalence of tooth decay in our children.\(^2\) Fluoride in drinking-water reduces demineralisation and promotes remineralisation of tooth enamel.\(^3\) Therefore, people of all ages benefit from CWF programmes.\(^4\)

- In New Zealand, oral health has improved considerably over the past 30 years, yet there remain significant disparities. Māori and Pacific children and adults experience worse oral health and lower access to dental services than other population groups.\(^5\) Those living in areas of high socioeconomic deprivation also experience worse oral health.\(^5\) Community water fluoridation contributes to the reduction of these inequalities.\(^2,6,7\)

- Robust review has not found any evidence of adverse health effects from fluoride when used at optimal levels as in CWF.\(^8\)

- Community water fluoridation is cost-effective.\(^9,10\) Preventing tooth decay with CWF is almost 30 times cheaper than treating it.\(^11\)

What can Local Government, District Health Boards and the Public do?

- Local government can commit to retaining and extending fluoridation of its drinking-water supplies.

- Local government, DHBs and the public can be informed about CWF from reliable and reputable sources of information such as the National Fluoridation Information Service and the Ministry of Health.

- DHBs can produce clear strong statements in support of community water fluoridation as well as improve access to dental services in their communities.

- The public can meet with local government and DHB candidates to determine their views on community water fluoridation and advocate for continuing and extending CWF.

- Find out where referenda on community water fluoridation are being held and vote to have your voice heard.
REFERENCES and MORE INFORMATION

For more information visit:

- National Fluoridation Information Service: www.nfis.org.nz

References


