

Share & Learn – Fluoride Communication in a Hesitant World

June 25, 2026

Speakers

UCSF: Susan Fisher-Owens, Marjorie Stocks

Sacramento County LOHP: Jennifer Fitzpatrick

Facilitator

Aubri Kottek (COHTAC)

Funding & Disclaimer

- **Acknowledgement:** This webinar is funded by the Office of Oral Health (OOH) within the California Department of Public Health. Funding is provided through Proposition 56 – the California Healthcare, Research and Prevention Tobacco Tax Act of 2016 – under Contract 22-10488. The California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center (COHTAC) assists OOH in advancing the California Oral Health Plan through technical assistance and training.
- **Disclaimer:** The presentations today are the content of the speakers and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the California Department of Public Health, California Health and Human Services Agency, OOH, or COHTAC.

Housekeeping

- Webinar is being recorded and will be posted on the COHTAC website and YouTube channel – follow-up materials and recording link will be emailed
- Questions, comments, and resource sharing are welcomed in the chat box and will be answered at the end of the presentations – please stay muted until called on
- As always, we appreciate your feedback – please take a minute at the end to complete our evaluation survey

COHTAC Share and Learn, 6/25/26

Fluoride Communication in a Hesitant World

Susan Fisher-Owens, MD, MPH, FAAP
Professor of Pediatrics, UCSF SOM
Professor of Preventive and Restorative
Dental Sciences, UCSF SOD
Chief Consultant, California Fluoride

Marjorie Stocks, MPH
Consultant, California Fluoride

Jennifer Fitzpatrick, BSDH, RDH
Dental Health Program Coordinator,
Sacramento County



Faculty Disclosure Information

Ms. Stocks has no conflicts to disclose.

Dr. Fisher-Owens in the past 12 months has had the following financial relationships with the manufacturer(s) of any commercial product(s): Colgate – Member, DSMB

We intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in our presentation: Fluoride varnish is licensed only for tooth sensitivity, not prevention, but it is recommended for this use by the AAP, AAPD, and the United States Preventive Services Task Force

Our comments are our own and do not represent any organizations with which we are affiliated.

Objectives

- Highlight Recent Controversies and New Literature about Community Water Fluoridation (CWF)
- Describe the Anatomy of a Rollback
- Understand the Current Challenges, Public Perceptions, and Political Landscape affecting LOHP's CWF Education and/or Advocacy
- Detail Evidence-Based Communication Strategies and Access Resources to Support CWF Efforts and Strengthen Community and Partner Engagement

Highlight Recent Controversies and New Literature about Community Water Fluoridation (CWF)

Dr. Fisher-Owens

A Decade Ago



National Toxicology Program Report Confirms Fluoride Exposure Harms Children's IQ

Troubled Government Report Finally Sees the Light of Day

Posted August 27, 2024 & filed under [Facts about Fluoride the News](#).

PR Newswire

Send a Release



Fluoride Report Walks Back Its Original Findings

FDA NEWS RELEASE

FDA Begins Action To Remove Ingestible
Fluoride Prescription Drug Products for
Children from the Market

**Fluoride is classified as
a neurotoxin in leading
medical journals**

THIS WEDNESDAY, THE EPA IS MEETING TO DISCUSS
NEXT STEPS IN REVIEWING THE SCIENCE ON FLUORIDE
IN DRINKING WATER

The Weight of Science



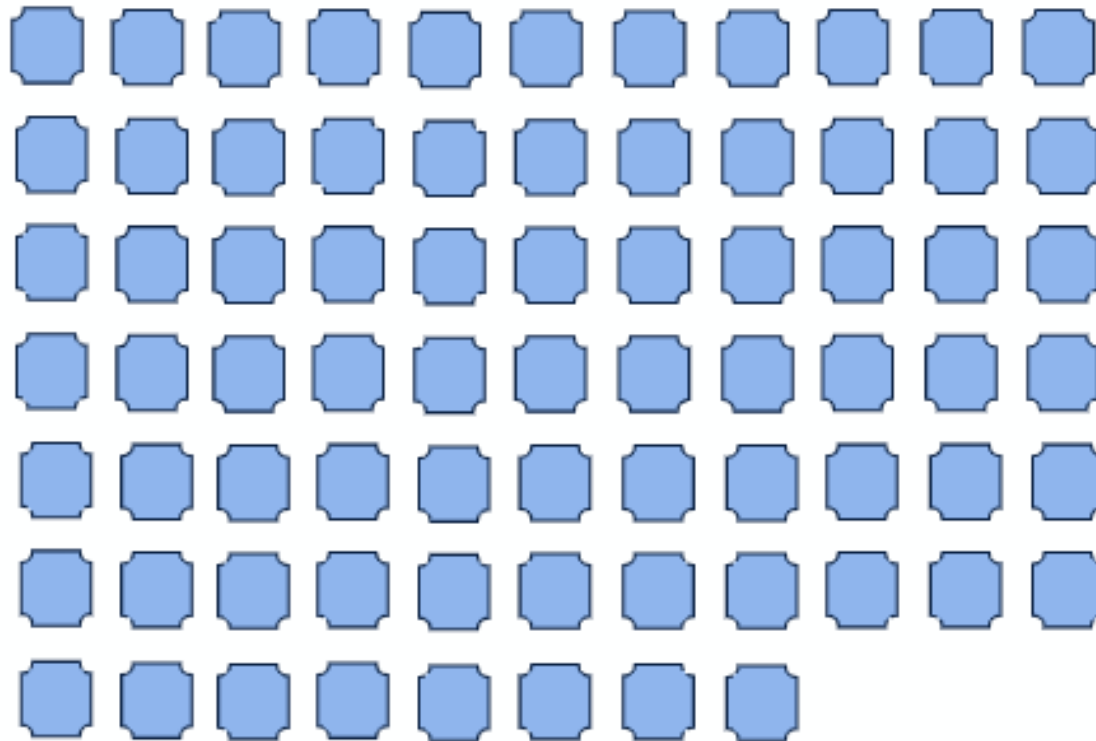
life is better
WITH TEETH

Issues with Previous Studies, including the NTP

- Subjects and Tests
 - Studies from India, Iraq, China, and Mexico
 - Higher water consumption, higher F in water, and do not control for smoking history or other exposure, including lead and arsenic
 - IQ on 3-4 year olds
 - Maternal urine test (1 in 10,000)
 - Depends on trimester, time of day, diet (esp. salt), and didn't control for child's birthweight, diet (vegetarian, prepared foods), time of day, smoking history
- Statistics

“NTP Meta-analysis”/ Taylor 2025

- 74 studies



January 6, 2025

Fluoride Exposure and Children's IQ Scores

A Systematic Review and Meta- Analysis

Kyla W. Taylor, PhD¹; Sorina E. Eftim, PhD²; Christopher A. Sibrizzi, MPH²; [et al](#)

[» Author Affiliations](#) | [Article Information](#)

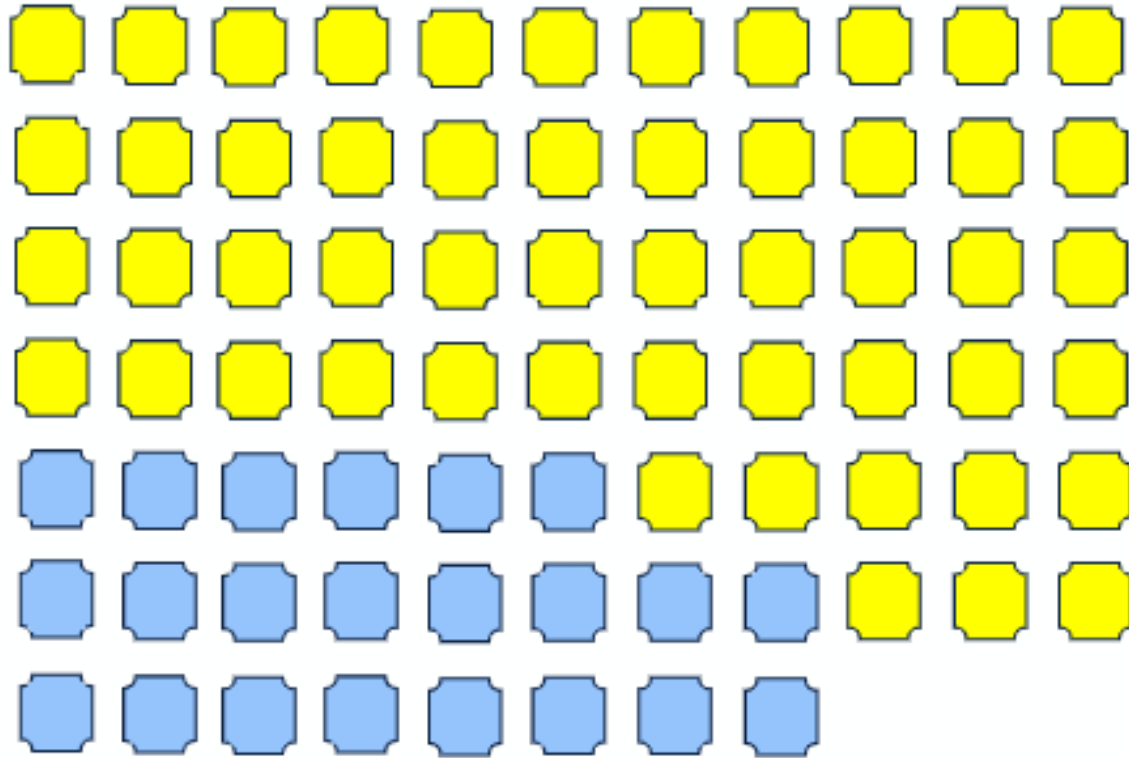
JAMA Pediatr. Published online January 6, 2025. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2024.5542

Key Points

Question Is fluoride exposure associated with children's IQ scores?

Findings Despite differences in exposure and outcome measures and risk of bias across studies, and when using group-level and individual-level exposure estimates, this systematic review and meta-analysis of 74 cross-sectional and prospective cohort studies found significant inverse associations between fluoride exposure and children's IQ scores. For fluoride measured in water, associations remained inverse when exposed groups were restricted to less than 4 mg/L or less than 2 mg/L but not when restricted to less than 1.5 mg/L; for fluoride measured in urine, associations remained inverse at less than 4 mg/L, less than 2 mg/L, and less than 1.5 mg/L; and among the subset of low risk-of-bias studies, there were inverse associations when exposed groups were restricted to less than 4 mg/L, less than 2 mg/L, and less than 1.5 mg/L for analyses of fluoride measured both in water and in urine.

“NTP Meta-analysis”/ Taylor 2025



- 52 of 74 studies (70%)
high risk of bias
- 28% from non-peer reviewed
- 17 papers from “Fluoride”
- Only 7 looked at <1.5ppm

***Weak basis for changing
public health policy***

Lack of Thorough Statistical Review

- Didn't adequately vet the studies
- Ignored clustering/didn't account for clustering in analyses
- Didn't use correct tests (eg, used statistic for ordinal variables when continuous)

Table 2 Predicted difference in FSIQ score for a doubling in the creatinine-adjusted fluoride concentration in mother's urine during pregnancy

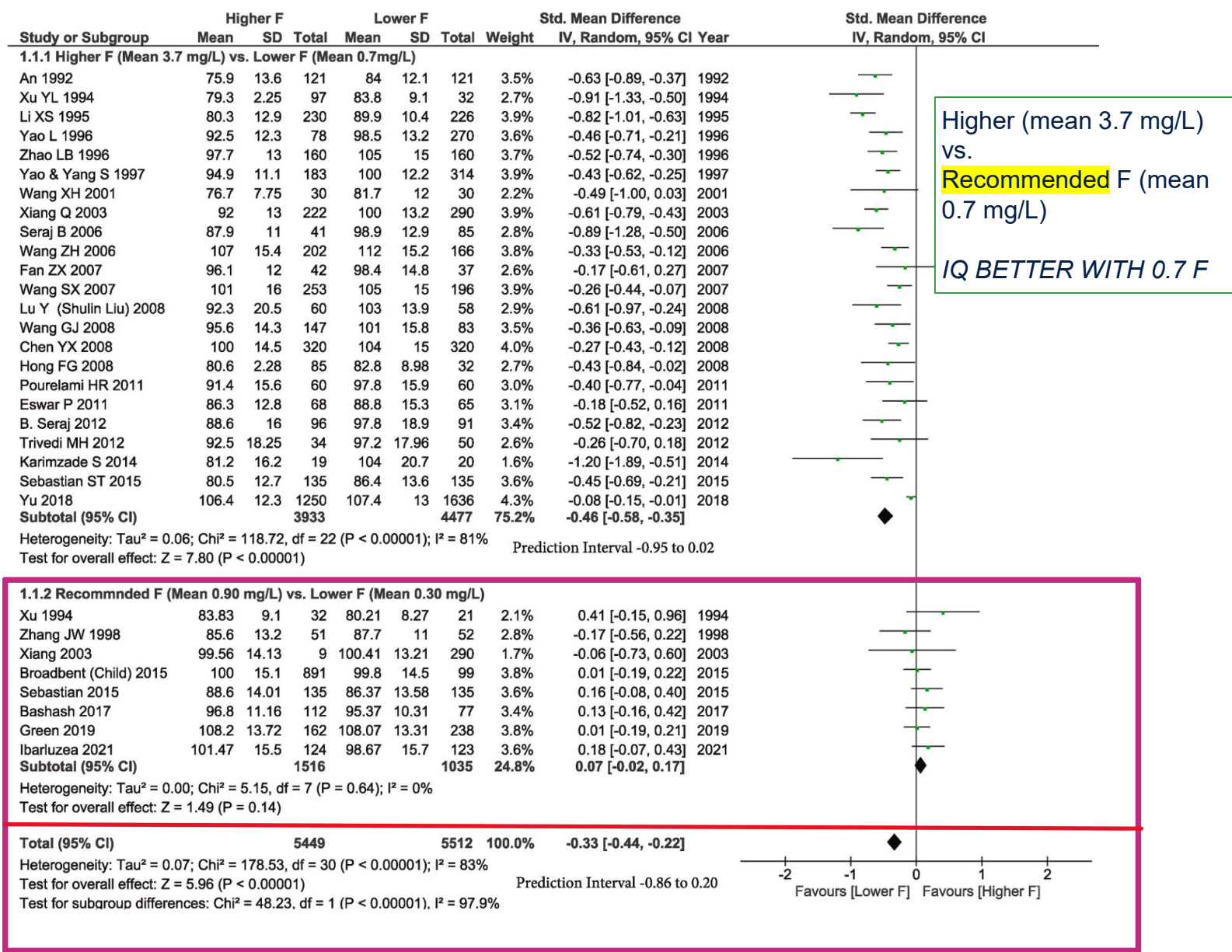
	All samples (mg/l)		Spot samples (mg/l)		24-h samples (mg/l)	
	N	β ^ (95% CI)	N	β ^ (95% CI)	N	β ^ (95% CI)
Simple model ^a						
All	837	0.08 (−1.14 to 1.30)	453	−0.05 (−1.55 to 1.45)	384	0.36 (−1.73 to 2.45)
Girls	402	−0.05 (−1.80 to 1.70)	216	−0.83 (−2.98 to 1.32)	186	0.67 (−2.35 to 3.70)
Boys	435	0.20 (−1.47 to 1.87)	237	0.68 (−1.40 to 2.77)	198	0.09 (−2.75 to 2.93)
Comprehensive model ^b						
All	460	0.18 (−1.39 to 1.76)	223	0.58 (−1.53 to 2.69)	237	−0.72 (−3.24 to 1.80)
Girls	221	−0.40 (−2.52 to 1.71)	101	−0.78 (−3.64 to 2.08)	120	−0.91 (−4.27 to 2.45)
Boys	239	0.87 (−1.41 to 3.15)	122	2.14 (−0.92 to 5.20)	117	−0.50 (−4.13 to 3.13)

Re: Letter to the Editor of Public Health in response to 'Association.....'? between low fluoride exposure and children's intelligence: A meta-analysis relevant to community water fluoridation'.

Jayanth V. Kumar, Mark E. Moss, Honghu Liu, Susan Fisher-Owens.

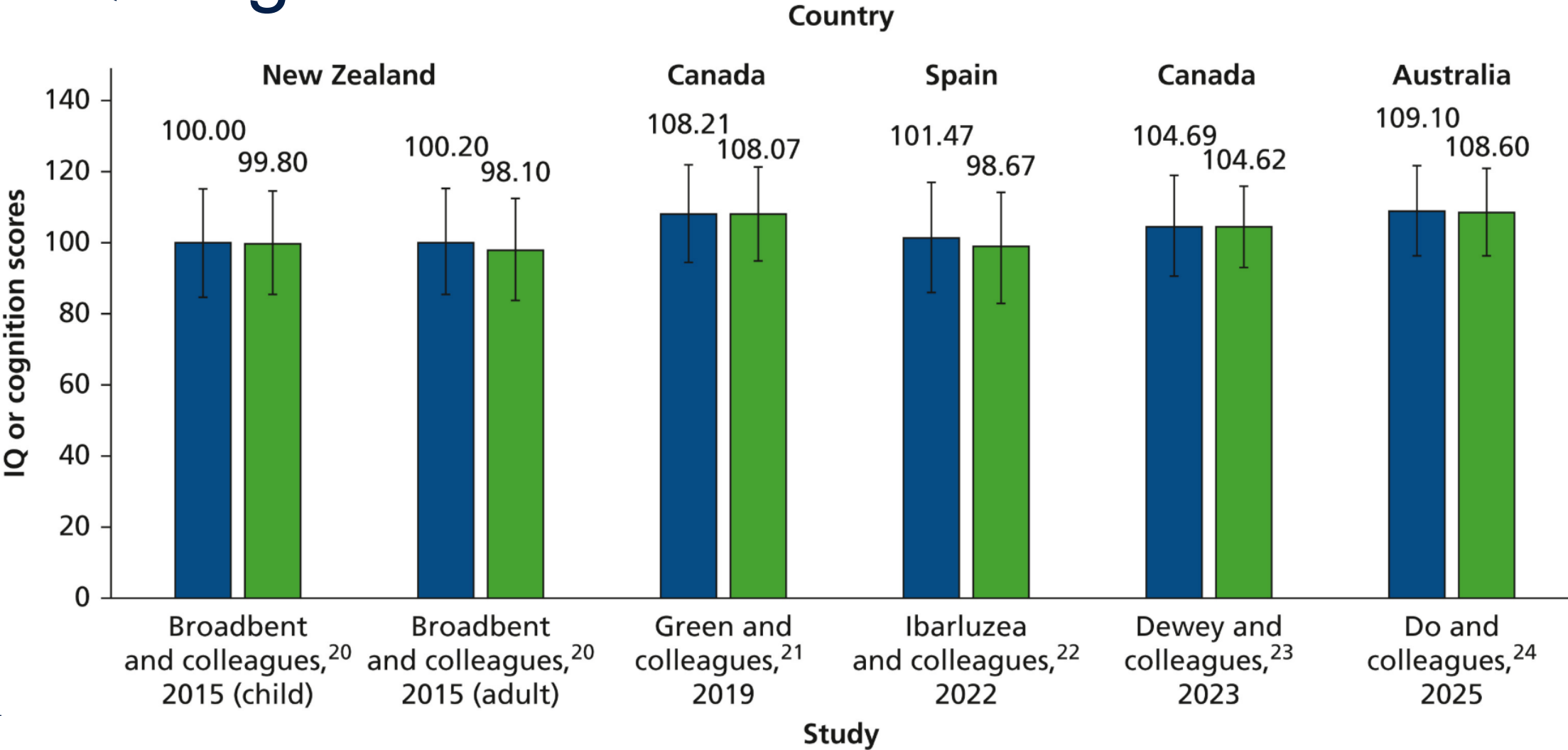
Public Health, 2025. Public Health, 2025. Volume 241, 2025, Pages 181-185.

Recommended F (mean 0.90 mg/L vs Lower F (mean 0.30 mg/L) IQ not different



Overall favors appropriate F

Cohort Studies with Comparable CWF and IQ/Cognition Scores





HOME > SCIENCE ADVANCES > VOL. 11, NO. 47 > CHILDHOOD FLUORIDE EXPOSURE AND COGNITION ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

| RESEARCH ARTICLE | PUBLIC HEALTH



Childhood fluoride exposure and cognition across the life course

[JOHN ROBERT WARREN](#) , [GINA RUMORE](#) , [SOOBIN KIM](#) , [ERIC GRODSKY](#) , [CHANDRA MULLER](#) , [JENNIFER J. MANLY](#) , AND [ADAM M. BRICKMAN](#)

[Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

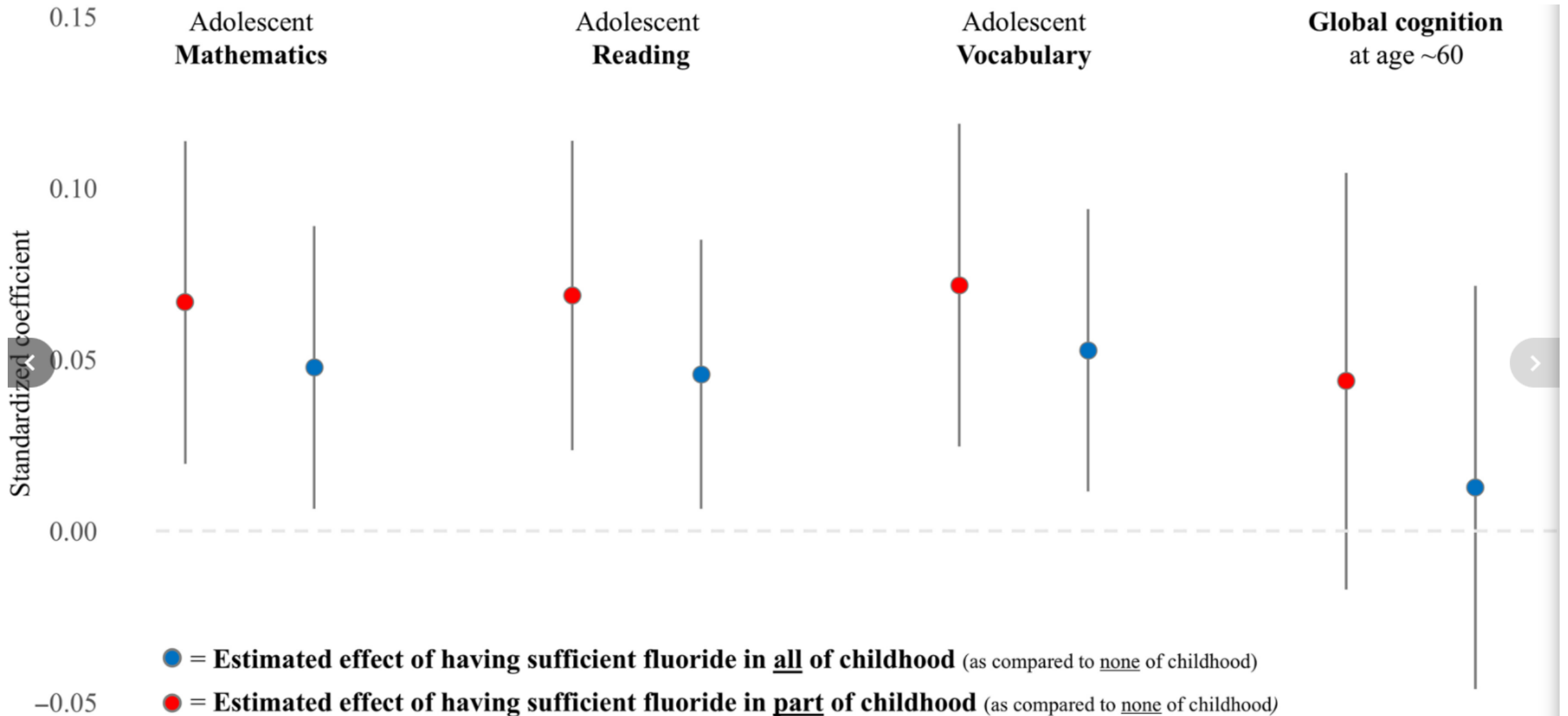
SCIENCE ADVANCES • 19 Nov 2025 • Vol 11, Issue 47 • DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.adz0757

42,629 6



Childhood Fluoride Exposure and Cognition across the Life Course

Warren et al, Science Advances, 11/25



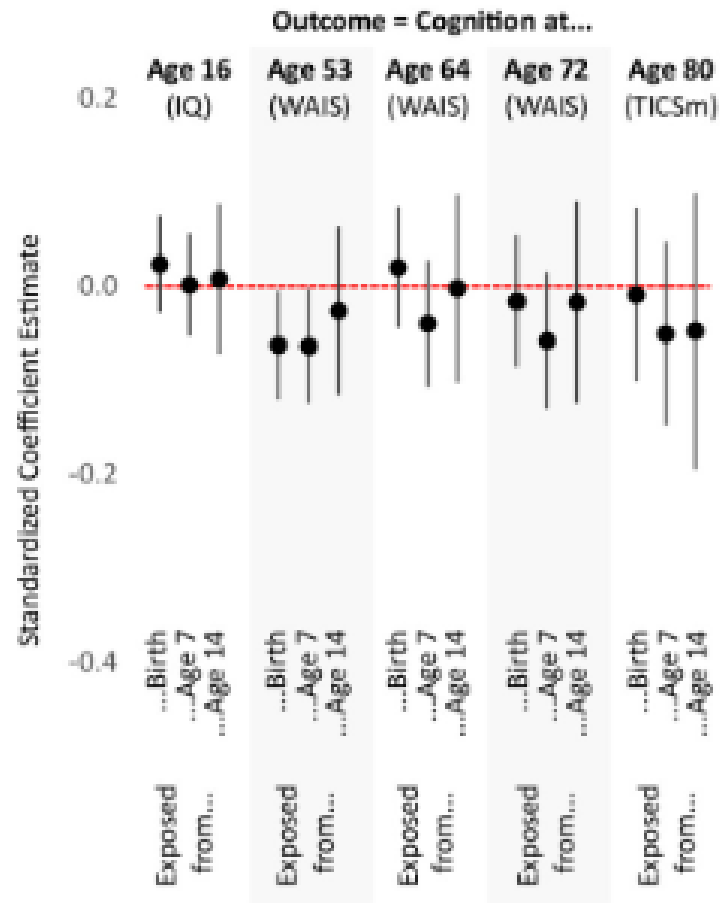
Municipal water fluoridation, adolescent IQ, and cognition across the life course: Evidence from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study

John Robert Warren  , Gina Rumore , Kamil Sicinski , , and Michal Engelman  [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

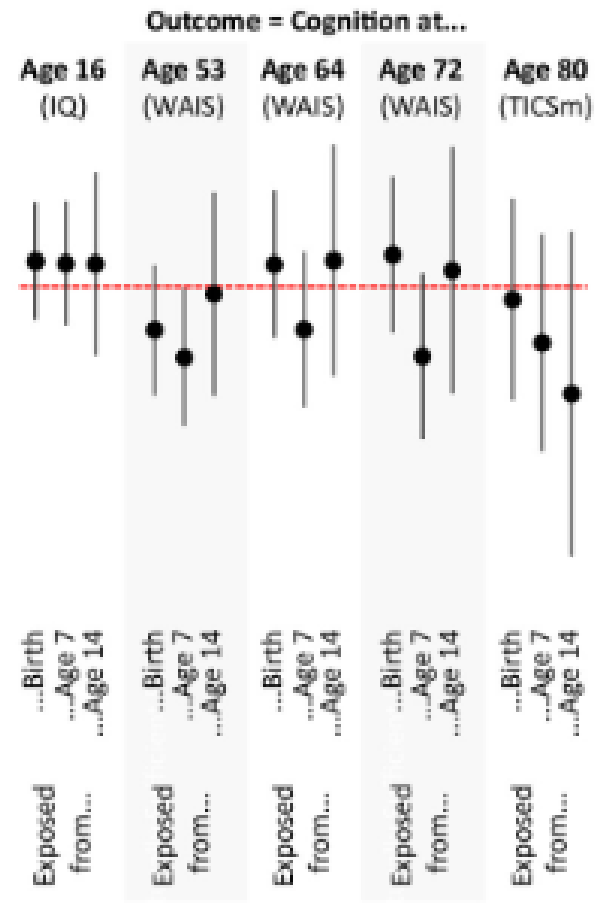
Edited by Greg J. Duncan, University of California, Irvine, CA; received December 10, 2025; accepted March 5, 2026

April 13, 2026 | 123 (16) e2536005123 | <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2536005123>

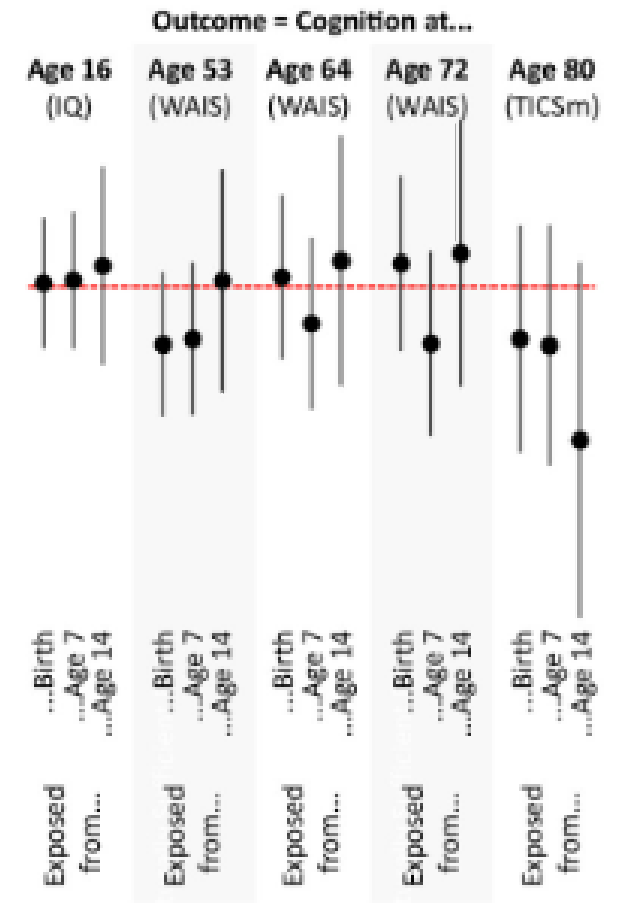
A Full Sample



B Lived in Same County, Ages 11 & 18

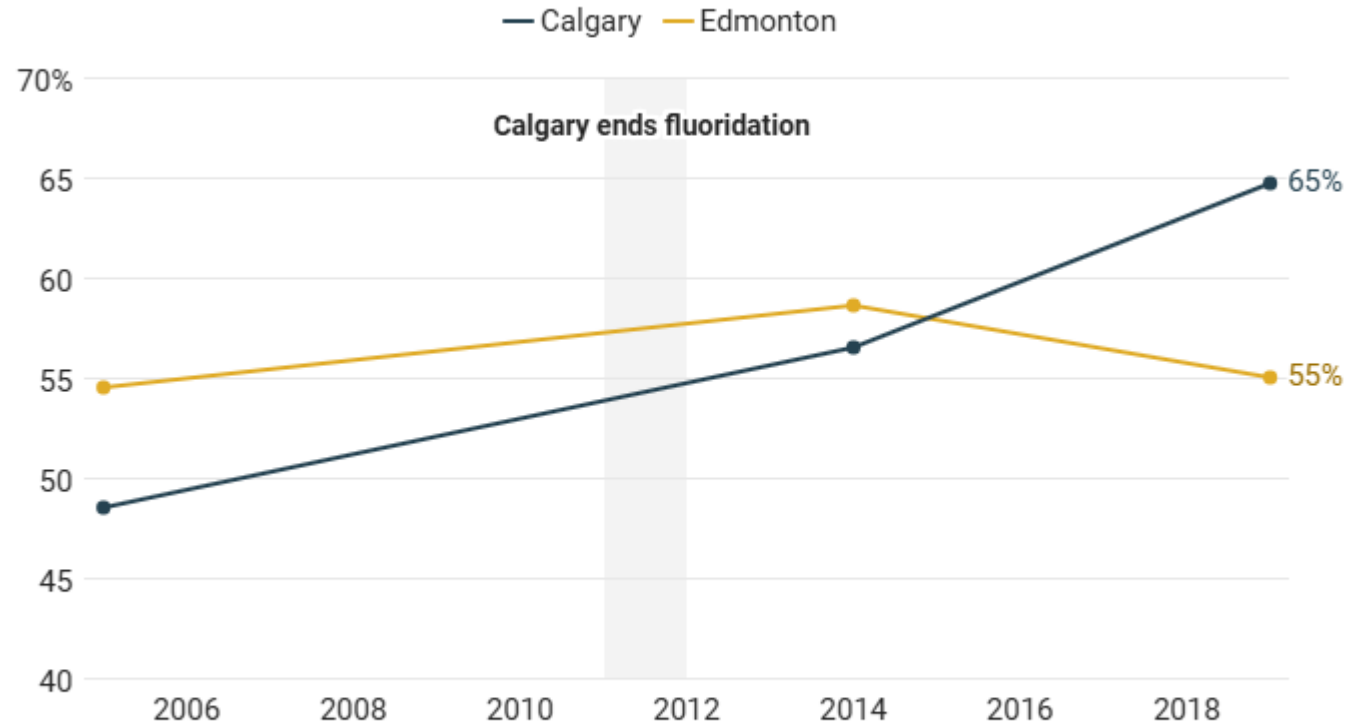


C Lived in Same County, Ages 1 and 18



Calgary—A Decade Later, They're Putting It Back

Percentage of children who experienced at least one cavity in two Alberta cities



McLaren et al, 2021

Chart: The Times and The Sunday Times • Source: National Library of Medicine

Describe the Anatomy of a Rollback

Marjorie Stocks

Oroville



San Diego



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO



Preventing or Reversing a Rollback

Marjorie Stocks, MPH

Fluoride Technical Assistance, UCSF



UC San Francisco Fluoride Technical Assistance Program

Marjorie Stocks, MPH Marjorie.Stocks@ucsf.edu

Susan Fisher-Owens, MD, MPH Susan.Fisher-Owens@ucsf.edu

Mark Bartson, P.E. Mark.Bartson@ucsf.edu



Preventing or Reversing a Rollback

Outline

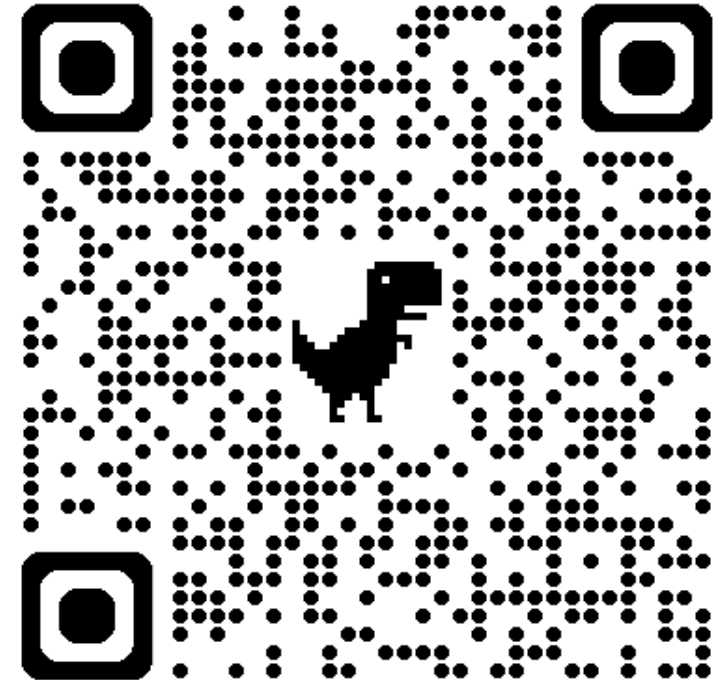
1. What is a rollback?
2. Reasons/causes of a rollback
3. How does it begin?
4. What is effective action?
5. What resources do you need?

California Fluoridation Manual

California Oral Health
Technical Assistance Center



UCSF





IV. Preventing or Reversing a Rollback

In the present context, the term *rollback* refers to the cessation of fluoridation in a community. A rollback is often initiated by those opposed to fluoridation. A rollback can occur in a community that has been fluoridated for many years.

How a Rollback Starts

California law on fluoridation supersedes a local ordinance if the water system has more than 10,000 service connections and funding is identified from a "source other than the system's ratepayers, shareholders, local taxpayers, bondholders, or any fees or charges levied by the water system". Additionally, governing bodies of water systems can choose voluntarily to initiate and continue fluoridation.

However, smaller systems and those where the funds are not identified, may be subject to rollback efforts. Either the action of the water system's governing body or a successful ballot measure can roll back fluoridation. A request to a city council or water system board of directors to cease fluoridation can cause a governing body to decide by majority vote to stop fluoridating the water supply. To roll back fluoridation in a privately-owned water system, the CPUC might also be involved.

Individuals opposed to fluoridation can approach the city council or the water system's board of directors and ask that they stop fluoridating. City government might stop fluoridation to save money. Or the opposition might gather enough qualifying signatures to place a stop fluoridation measure on the ballot of an upcoming election.

It is crucial to act quickly.

Investigate the Reason for the Proposed Rollback

If the attempt to roll back is within the purview of the governing body, find out the following:

- Why was the cessation of fluoridation proposed?
- Who initiated and who supported the cessation of fluoridation?
- Was the measure an attempt to save costs?
- Were equipment problems or operating costs a factor?

What is a Rollback?

- Cessation of fluoridation by a water system.
- A rollback can occur in a community that has been fluoridated for many years.

Activate the Rollback Response Team

- Office of Oral Health
- OfficeofOralHealth@cdph.ca.gov
- UCSF Fluoridation Team
- Susan.Fisher-Owens@ucsf.edu

Investigate the Reason for the Rollback

- Why was the cessation proposed?
- Who initiated and who supported cessation of fluoridation?
- Is it a measure to save capital or operating costs?
- Can you assist in locating funding for operations costs?
- Can you develop support from the governing body to allocate the necessary funding?

Investigate the Reason for the Rollback

- Were equipment problems a factor?
- Was it difficult to obtain the fluoride chemical?

You may need the resources of a water engineer!

Contact me at Marjorie.Stocks@ucsf.edu

Form a Coalition

Reach out to community agencies:

- Develop a steering committee or **coalition**, identify community agencies.
- Develop a **communication strategy**; confront misinformation.
- Develop **talking points** to preventing the rollback.
- Send **letters** to decision-makers.

Recommended Approach

- Be proactive in responding to the rollback. Monitor system changes closely and engage partners early rather than assuming fluoridation will automatically resume.
- Community engagement is essential, as water systems are more likely to take action when they hear directly from the communities they serve.

Why a Timely Response is Essential

- Sooner advocates respond to a rollback attempt, more likelihood of success.
- Advocating in support of fluoridation before it has stopped is easier than advocating to place it back in the budget.
- Equipment problems can arise if idle.

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the “promotion of an idea that is directed at changing a policy, position, or program at an institution.” (IRS, 2016)

Advocacy is a strategy that aims to draw attention to or educate a policymaker on a particular issue. Health advocacy includes educating policymakers and the public about evidence-based policy. Advocacy can often be non-partisan and based in research and analysis.

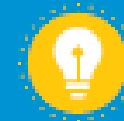
Effective advocacy can do the following:

- Build relationships with policymakers.
- Educate and influence a policymaker or lawmaker’s decision.
- Alter existing policies, laws, and budgets.
- Encourage the creation of new programs.

What is Lobbying?

Lobbying is the attempt to influence a legislative body through communication with a member or employee of the legislative body or with a government official who participates in constructing legislation. Lobbying can include written or oral communication for or against specific legislation. Rules about lobbying vary according to local jurisdictions. Check the rules in your local health department.

The National Conference of State Legislatures lists state definitions of lobbying and lobbyist.⁴³



TIP It is best to check with your administrator before implementing your education and advocacy plan. Lobbying by local and state government employees is generally prohibited. See Fluoridation Education and Advocacy Checklist in Appendix B

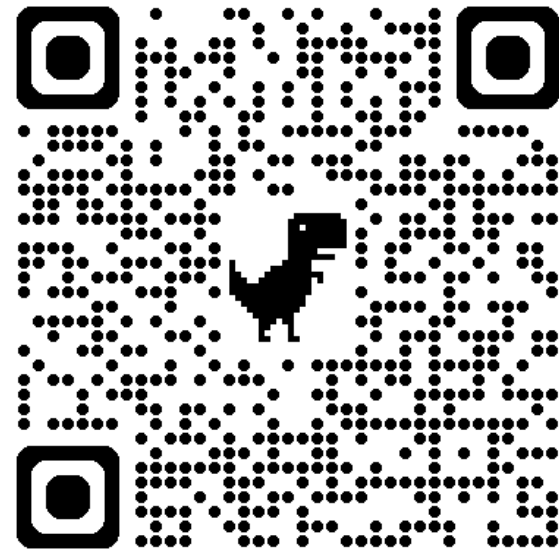


TIP It is best to check with your administrator before implementing your education and advocacy plan. Lobbying by local and state government employees is generally prohibited. See Fluoridation Education and Advocacy Checklist in Appendix B.



OLIVENHAIN

Municipal Water District
A Public Agency





Olivenhain Municipal Water District

How did we learn?

- State Water Resources Control Board reached out to UCSF.
- Researched Board minutes to track the issue.
- OMWD began fluoridating in 2013.



Olivenhain Municipal Water District

- CDA partner contacted Executive Director, San Diego County Dental Society.
- Reactivated previously developed coalition in San Diego County. Some of the dentists were still available.
- Coalition members still lived in the district.
- Sent letters with signatures.



Olivenhain Municipal Water District

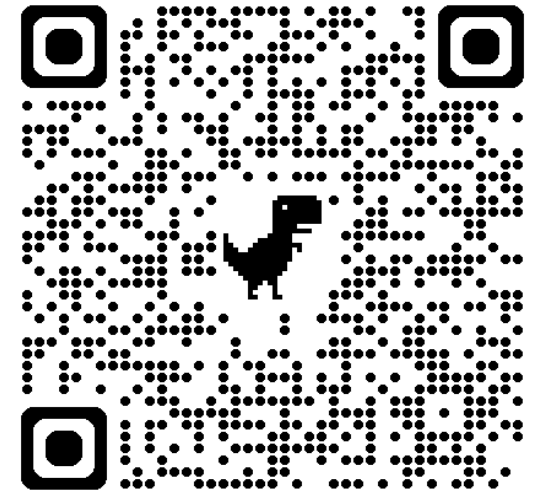
- Sent letters and emails to Board Members.
- Engaged the Local Oral Health Program.
- County Dental Officer and Public Health Officer sent letters.
- Partners contacted Board Members.
- Reached out to the SWRCB District Engineer.



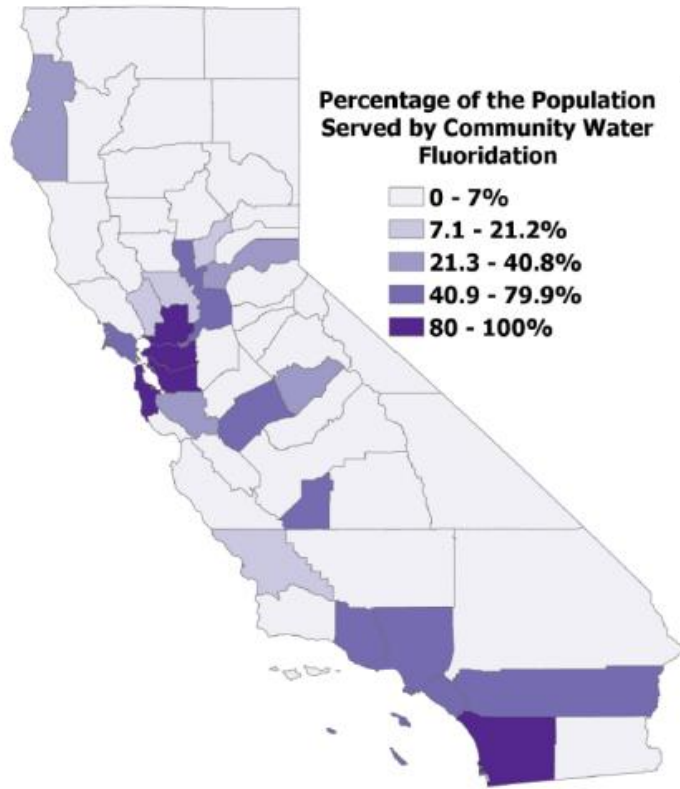
Olivenhain Municipal Water District

OMWD Board Meeting:

- Public testimony; personal stories.
- Public health measure.
- Return on Investment Infographic.
- Case for social equity.



Community Water Fluoridation [NAME] County



Population Served by Community Water Fluoridation:

[POPULATION] (**[PERCENT]** of the population served by fluoridated water)



Olivenhain Municipal Water District

Outcome:

- Community action was a two-step process.
- Fluoridation is *Paused* while they reconfigure their system.

A background image of water with many small, clear bubbles rising from the bottom right towards the top left, set against a light blue gradient.

Fluoride

OMWD has paused fluoridation to pursue improvements at David C. McCollom Water Treatment Plant that impact the fluoridation system.





CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH



How did we hear? American Dental Association

- Fluoridated since 1970's.
- CDA contacted Orange County Dental Society President.
- Mobilized speakers.
- Shared evidence from communities that have stopped fluoridating.



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH



- 150 signatures in support of fluoridation.
- Letters from AAP and AAPD.
- 34 letters to Council.

Outcome: fluoridation removed from the agenda.

Fluoridation item was dropped from city council agenda

ON MAY 6, 2026 • (1 COMMENT)



City of Santa Maria





City of
Santa Maria

Santa Maria 2018

Governed by City Council

- Informed by former coalition member and dentist.
- Fluoridation removed from water district budget.
- Contacted City Manager.



City of
Santa Maria

Santa Maria 2018

Engaged:

- The LOHP
- Previous coalition members
- Local dentists
- Santa Barbara County Office of Education



City of
Santa Maria

Santa Maria 2018

Engaged:

- Promotoras - Vision & Compromiso
- Santa Barbara County Public Health Department
- Area Agency on Aging
- Community Health Centers of the Central Coast



City of
Santa Maria

Santa Maria 2018

- Educated newly elected council members.
- Letters of support to re-educate council members.

Outcome: City council voted to restart fluoridation.

WATER QUALITY REPORT



This report provides information regarding the quality of water for the City of Santa Maria during 2025. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to State standards. Through planning and operational efficiency, the City continues to provide reliable drinking water.



(805) 925-0951 ext. 7270 • www.cityofsantamaria.org

2065 East Main Street • Santa Maria, CA 93454
TDD 800-735-2929 (English) • 800-855-3000 (Español)

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua para beber. Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

From their website:

As directed by the City Council in 2019, **fluoridation** of the City's water supply was reinstated in 2020. Information about community water **fluoridation** is available online at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website.

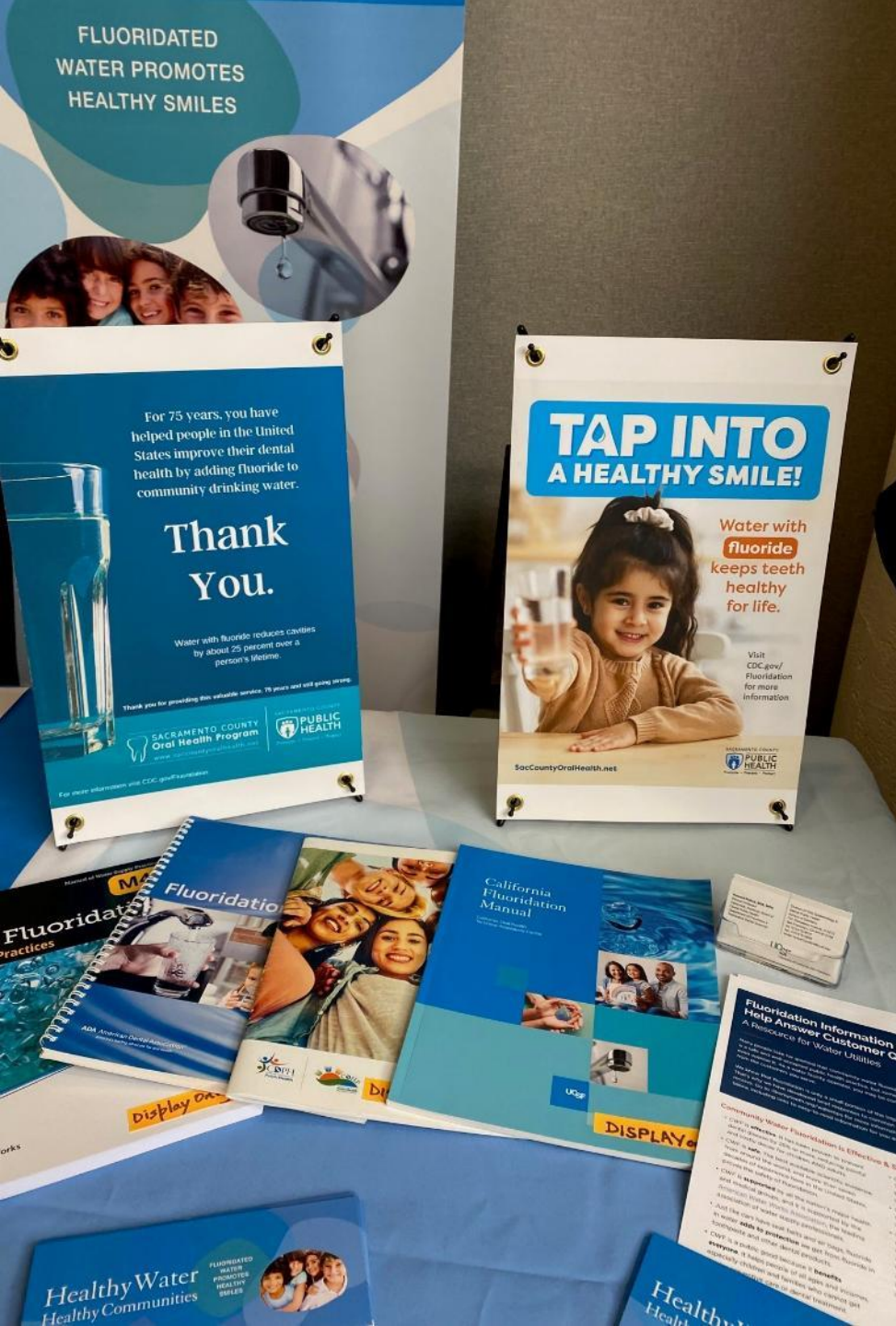
Recommended Approach

- Be proactive in responding to the rollback. Monitor system changes closely and engage partners early rather than assuming fluoridation will automatically resume.
- Community engagement is essential, as water systems are more likely to take action when they hear directly from the communities they serve.



Understand the Current Challenges, Public Perceptions, and Political Landscape affecting LOHP's CWF Education and/or Advocacy

Jennifer Fitzpatrick



COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN A SHIFTING FLUORIDE LANDSCAPE

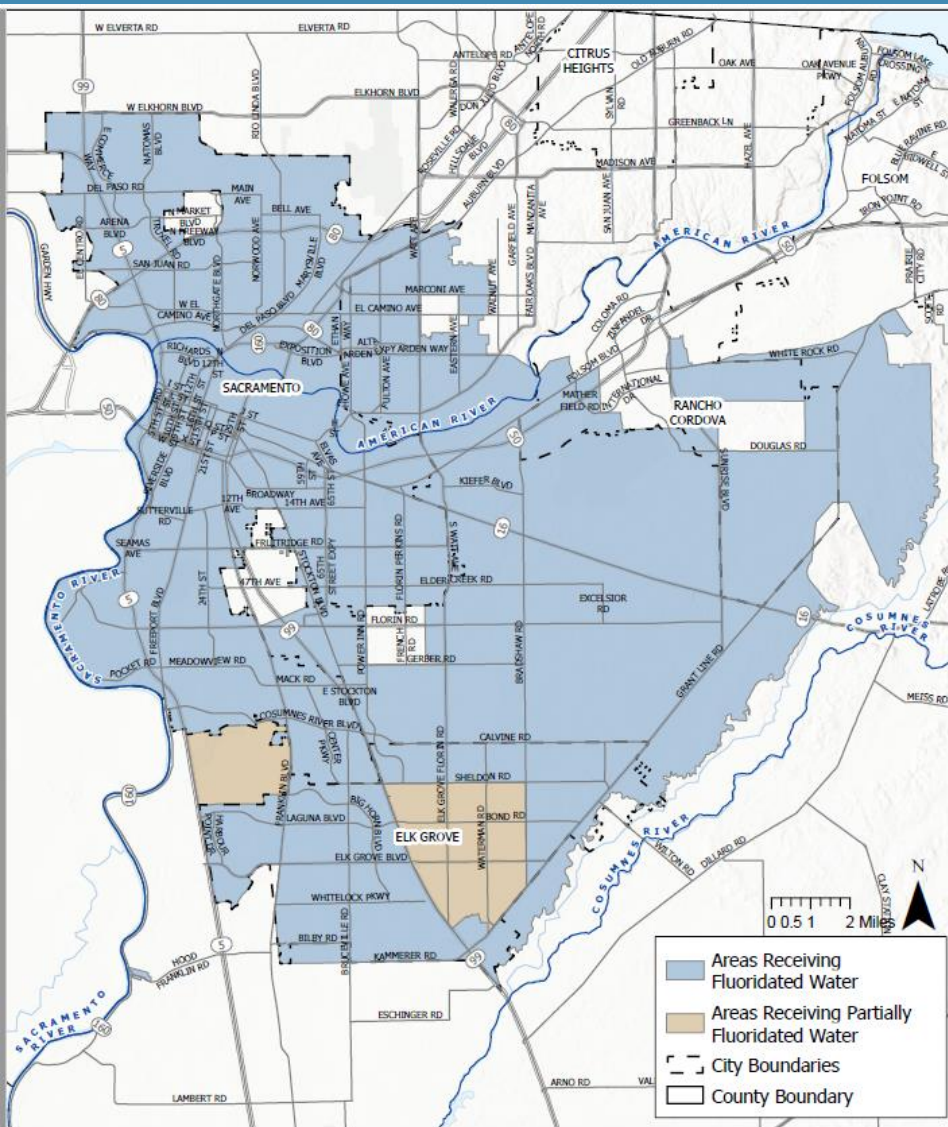


SACRAMENTO COUNTY
Oral Health Program
www.saccountyoralthhealth.net

SACRAMENTO COUNTY
 **PUBLIC HEALTH**
Promote • Prevent • Protect

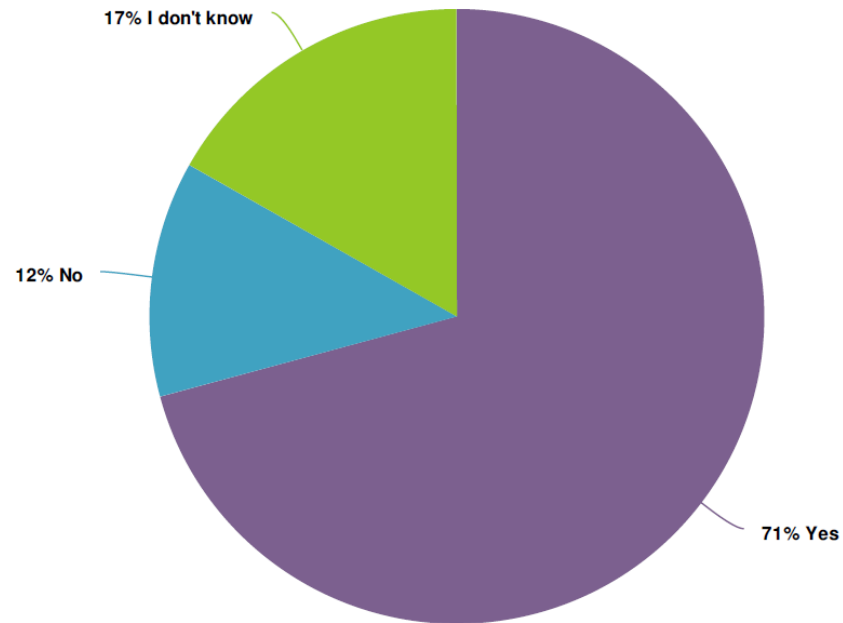
SACRAMENTO COUNTY

- 9 out of 27 districts provide optimally fluoridated water
- 885,470 (65%) residents have access to fluoridated drinking water



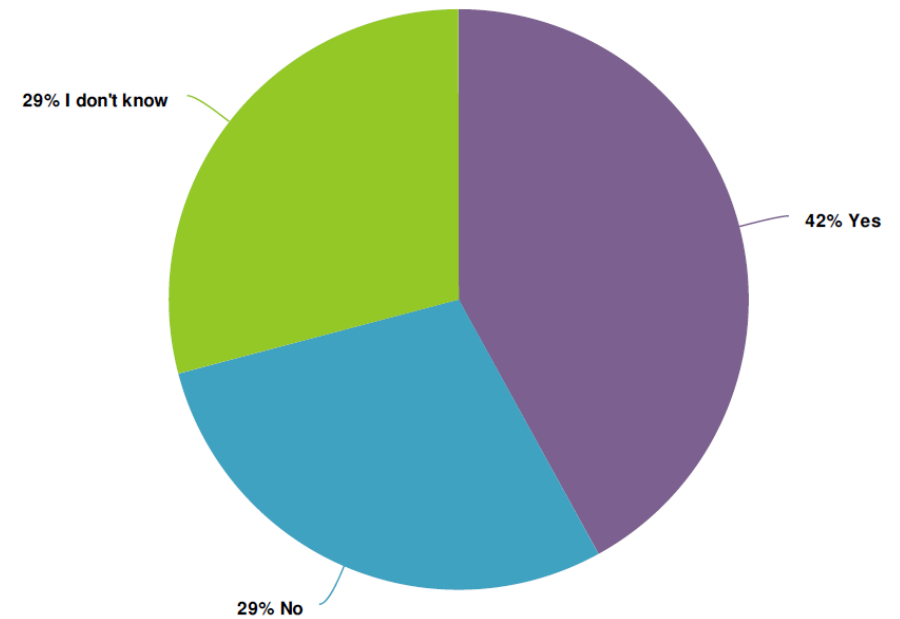
2020 COMMUNITY DRINKING WATER SURVEY

6. Do you agree that fluoride is good for your teeth?



**71% agree that fluoride is
good for teeth**

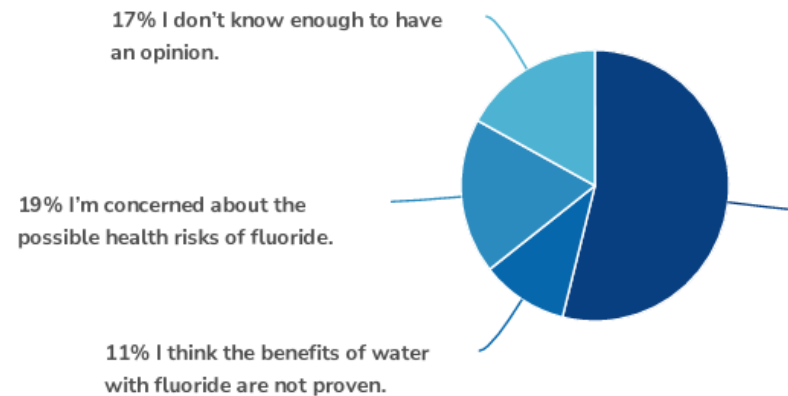
12. Do you agree that your tap water at home should include fluoride?



**42% agree that tap water
should include fluoride**

2025 COMMUNITY ORAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

3. Which of the following best describes your beliefs about fluoride in drinking water?



**54% believe water
with fluoride makes
teeth strong**

PAID SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

- Ads targeted and boosted to caregivers of young children
- Promote awareness and acceptance of drinking fluoridated tap water
- Drive traffic to the SCOHP webpage on community water fluoridation





Sacramento County - Government ✓

Sponsored · 🌐



Communities that drink water with fluoride experience 25% fewer cavities—saving families time and costly dental visits. Does everyone in your community have access to water with fluoride? To learn more and help spread the word, visit www.saccountyoralth.net

Tooth decay gets
in the way of learning.

Water with fluoride helps
a healthy community grow.



www.saccountyoralth.net

DHS.SACCOUNTY.GOV

Oral Health Home

A healthy mouth, teeth and gums are essential ...

[Learn more](#)

- 2,482 clicks to Sac County Oral Health website = 5x average
- Ad featuring “Tooth decay gets in the way of learning.” received the most sustained interest
- Demographic: Female, aged 35-44 or 65+ years old



TAP INTO A HEALTHY SMILE!

Water with **fluoride** keeps
teeth healthy for life.

SacCountyOralHealth.net





BILLBOARD AND TRANSIT SHELTER ADS

- 9 weeks/100 transit shelters = 53 million impressions
- Electronic billboard display

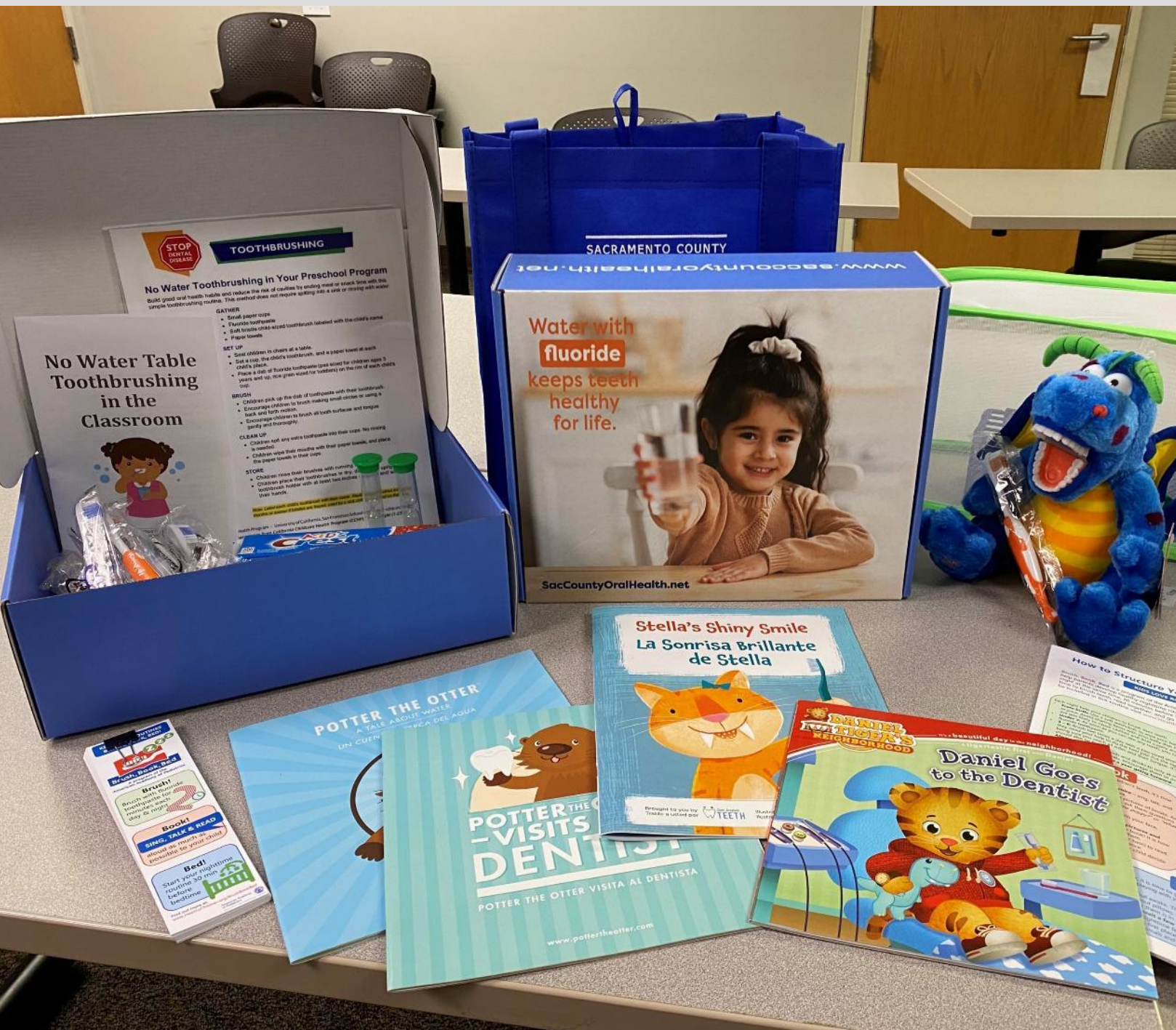
TARGETED MOBILE DISPLAY AD CAMPAIGN

- Re-targeting ads to mobile and desktop devices to enhance reach and drive engagement
- Ads targeted by location and audience to households with children living in fluoridated water districts
- Mobile ad impressions = 1.1 million



BRUSH-BOOK-BED IN A BOX

- BBB kits packed in mailing boxes featuring the “Tap into a Healthy Smile” message
- Classroom posters promoting awareness and acceptance of community fluoridated water
- Potter the Otter: A Tale About Water for classroom library



COMMUNITY EVENTS AND OUTREACH

- Positive fluoride messaging at every touchpoint
- Handout covers all types of fluoride
- Free co-branding available via Smile CA



Fluoride Fights Tooth Decay

Fluoride occurs naturally in water and helps protect your teeth from cavities.

Ways to Protect Against Decay

Ask About Fluoride Varnish Treatment at Your Next Dental Visit

Fluoride varnish is a gel that is put on teeth to help protect against tooth decay. **Fluoride varnishes are covered by Medi-Cal every 12 months for adults, and more often for children, depending on their age.**



Brush Regularly

Brush two times a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride. **Recommended toothpaste amount by age:**

	0-3 years: grain of rice
	3+ years: pea size

Parents should assist children when they're brushing their teeth until they can brush on their own. When choosing a toothpaste with fluoride look for the American Dental Association (ADA) seal.

Drink Fluoridated Water

Drinking fluoridated water is better for your oral health than sugary drinks.



KEY PARTNER OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Public Health Nurses
- Pediatric Primary Care Providers
- Dental Professionals
- Dental and Dental Hygiene Students
- School Nurses and Support Staff

SAY THIS, NOT THAT:

Tips for talking about Community Water Fluoridation

Many people take for granted that community water fluoridation (CWF) in the U.S. is a safe and well-accepted public health practice, but CWF is surprisingly controversial. As a health professional, it is natural to use technical language. But when talking about water fluoridation, it is important to use words and phrases that don't add to confusion or fear.

These tips are intended to prepare you to have comfortable, productive conversations with patients using "kitchen table" language to address their concerns and inoculate them against common distortions about fluoride safety.

SAY THIS:



Fluoride is a proven way to strengthen teeth for people of all ages.

Fluoride opponents use fear and doubt to gain support. Rather than addressing such tactics, focus on the scientifically proven benefits of water fluoridation: stronger teeth lead to better overall health which means that children and adults don't suffer the pain and expense of treatment and get to keep their teeth for a lifetime.



Fluoride occurs naturally in all water.

While scientifically correct, the word "chemical" can have a negative connotation. Point out that fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in almost all water supplies. We adjust the level to the right amount to prevent tooth decay.



I understand your concerns. I had the same ones until I looked into the issue.

Acknowledging your patients' concerns gives you an opportunity to share sound information. It is important to be attentive and to avoid using conversation-stoppers. This phrase can be used at any point in the conversation when concerns are raised.



There is a lot of misinformation about fluoride. Based on what you've seen, is there a specific concern you'd like to discuss?

The best way to address concerns, and to inoculate people against misinformation about fluoride, is

NOT THAT:



Potential harm from fluoride has been greatly distorted.



Fluoride is a chemical added to water.



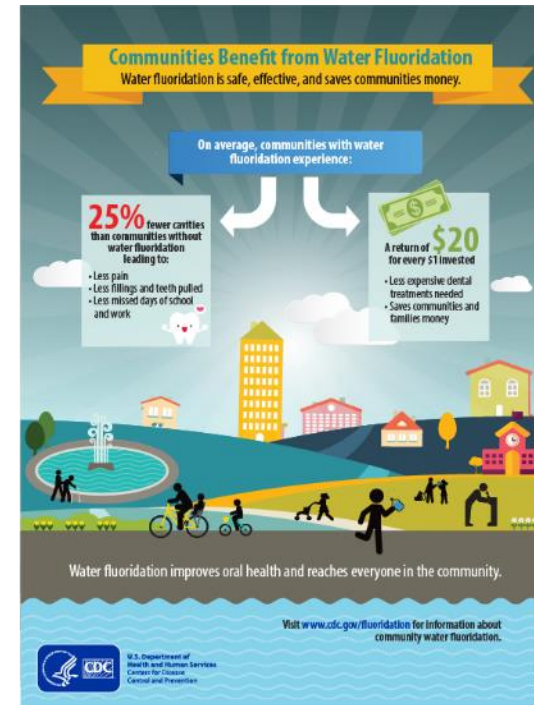
There is nothing to worry about.



Don't trust everything you read on the internet.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Educational materials available from CDC and AAP
- Encourage drinking tap water
- Emphasize oral health benefits
- Tailored to the audience



For nearly 80 years, you have helped people in the United States improve their dental health by adding fluoride to community drinking water.

Thank
You.

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

Thank you for providing this valuable service. 80 years and still going strong.



SACRAMENTO COUNTY
Oral Health Program

www.saccountyoralhealth.net

SACRAMENTO COUNTY



PUBLIC
HEALTH

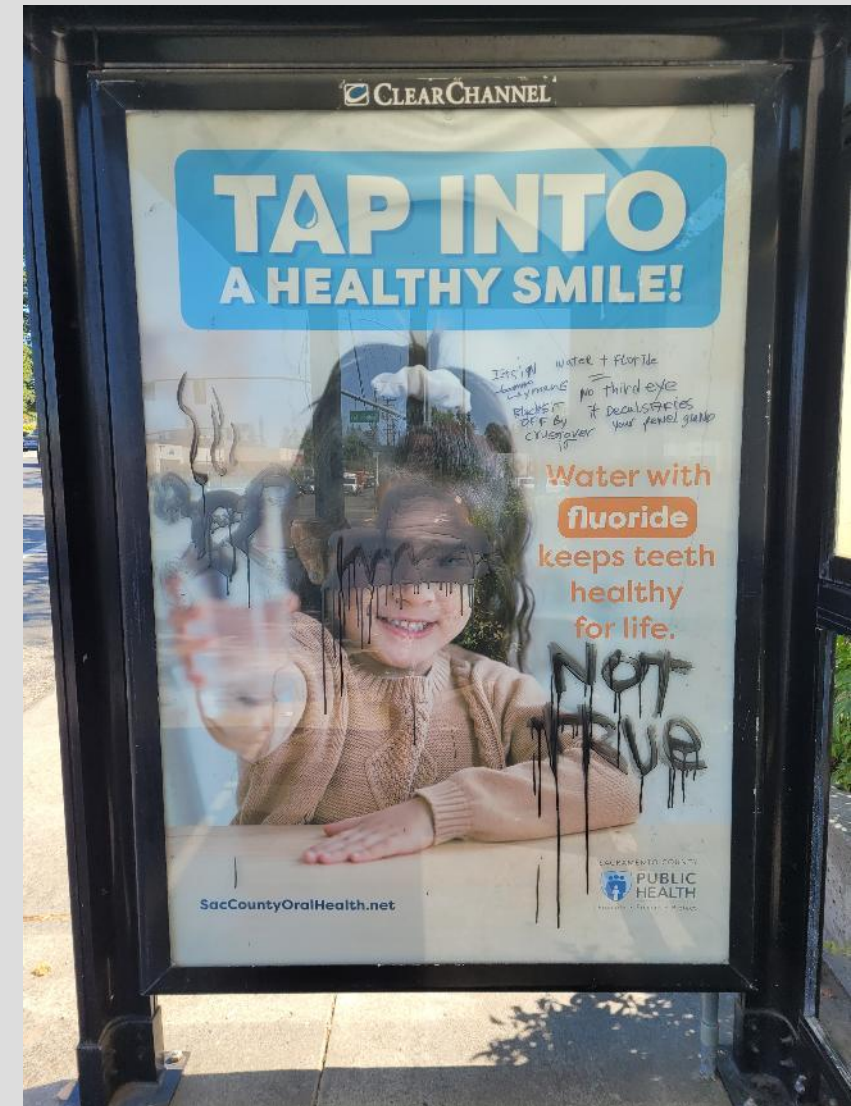
Promote • Prevent • Protect

WATER OPERATOR AND ENGINEER OUTREACH



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Navigating adverse political landscape
- Be proactive & rally support
- Engage allies and leverage resources



JENNIFER FITZPATRICK

HEALTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

FitzpatrickJen@SacCounty.gov

916-875-4507



Fluoride Strategic Meeting 6/25



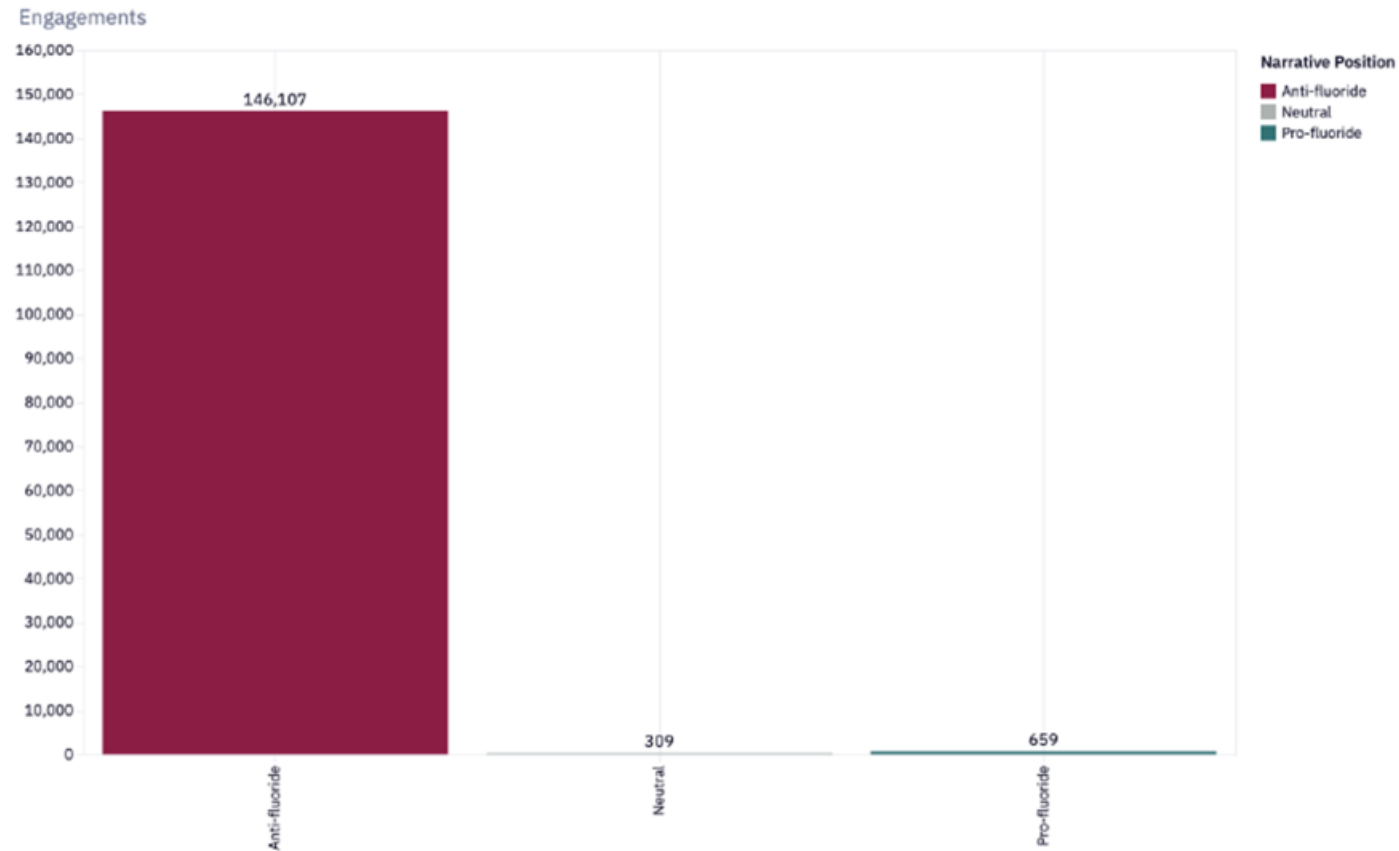


California Fluoride Strategic Meeting

Purpose

- The primary objective is to collaboratively inform the development of a California Fluoride Plan to maintain current efforts and prevent rollback attempts.
- The Strategic Meeting will provide an opportunity for fluoride experts, advocates, and community leaders to engage in meaningful discussions on advanced topics, challenges, and strategies to improve oral health.

Tally of Pro- vs Anti-fluoridation narratives on social media October 2025 - April 2026



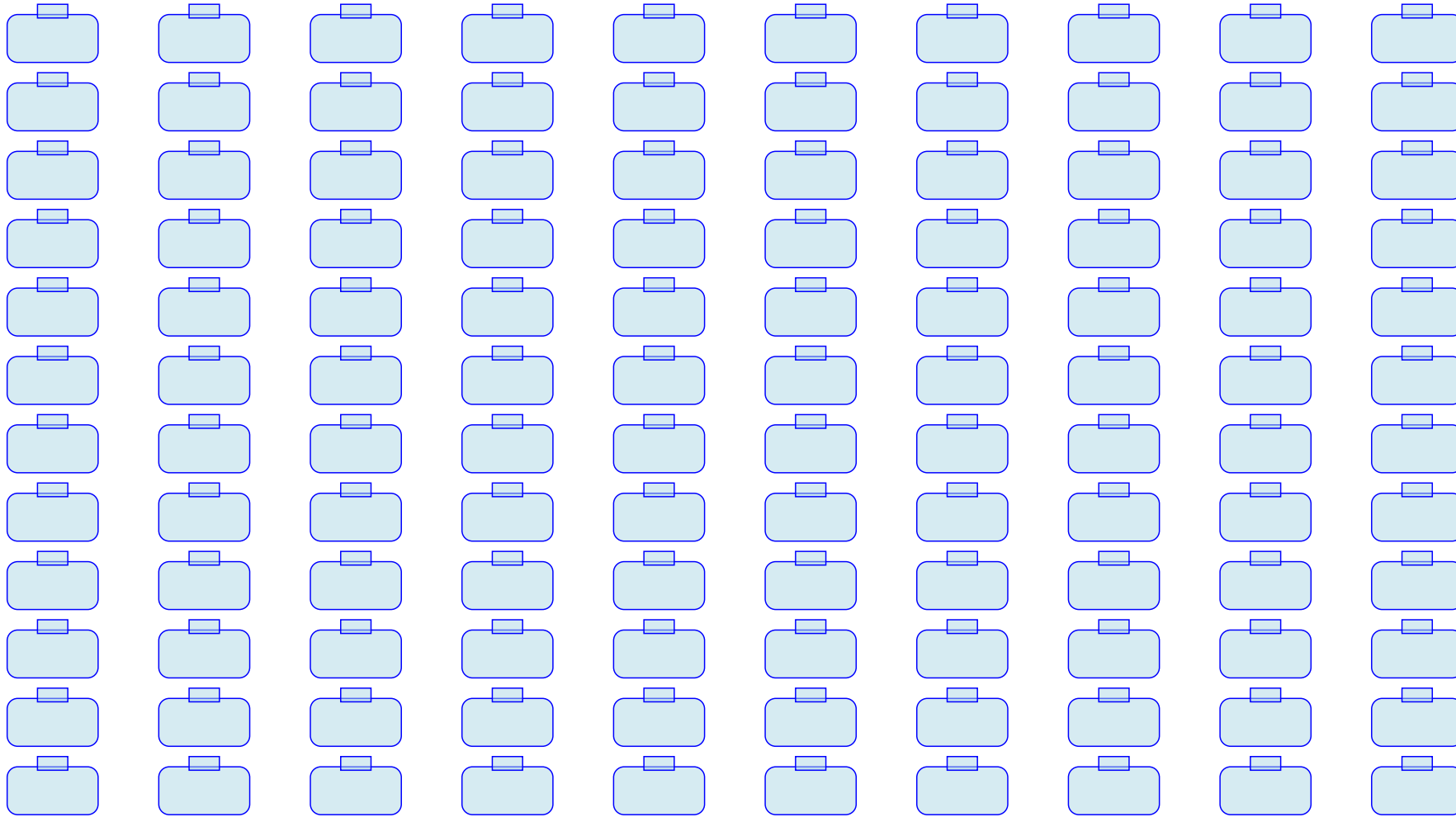
Detail Evidence-Based Communication Strategies and Access Resources to Support CWF Efforts and Strengthen Community and Partner Engagement

Dr. Fisher-Owens

- Folic acid in flour
- Iodine in salt
- Vitamin D in milk

- Natural mineral
- Naturally in water
- More than 7,000 studies show safety of CWF
- To have a problem, would have to drink 120 gallons of water in 1 sitting!

How Much is Too Much?



- Hydroxyapatite?
- Can I take it out?
- Take the decision to the end
- Do children have a choice to be born poor?
With no healthy food options? Into a family
who can't afford a toothbrush and
toothpaste?

9-year-old girl dies after going under anesthesia for dental procedure at San Diego office

The March 18 procedure was done at Dreamtime Dentistry. A dentist at the office had been investigated after a patient nearly died in 2016.



NOTHING without Risk

Resources



CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer, Dr. Erica Pan, MD, MPH
CDPH State Dental Director, Dr. Shakalpi Pendurkar, DDS, MPH

“The California Department of Public Health supports optimal levels of fluoride in drinking water as a safe, effective and cost-saving public health intervention to improve the health and well-being of California's diverse people and communities. Community water fluoridation is the single most cost-effective, equitable, and safe public health measure to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health. One of the biggest benefits of water fluoridation is that it helps everyone in the community and especially those without access to regular dental care. Optimal levels of fluoride in water are effective in preventing tooth decay throughout life, resulting in fewer and less severe cavities. Furthermore, water fluoridation has been endorsed by every major health organization in the United States and many other countries, as well as every Surgeon General for the past 50 years...

April 1, 2025



CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer, Dr. Erica Pan, MD, MPH
CDPH State Dental Director, Dr. Shakalpi Pendurkar, DDS, MPH

...The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has named community water fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century. Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that effectively prevents and protects teeth from tooth decay. Fluoride stops or can even reverse the tooth decay process, keeping tooth enamel strong for both children and adults. All drinking water naturally contains some fluoride. Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the naturally occurring fluoride level to the optimum level for preventing tooth decay.

April 1, 2025

Post #1

Platforms: FB, IG, X, Bluesky, Threads
Desired post date:

Copy:

🦷 💧 Fluoride is a natural mineral found in water that helps prevent and even reverse cavities. It's also added at safe levels to tap water to help protect your teeth. Fluoride is a safe and easy way to help teeth stay strong and healthy for kids and adults.

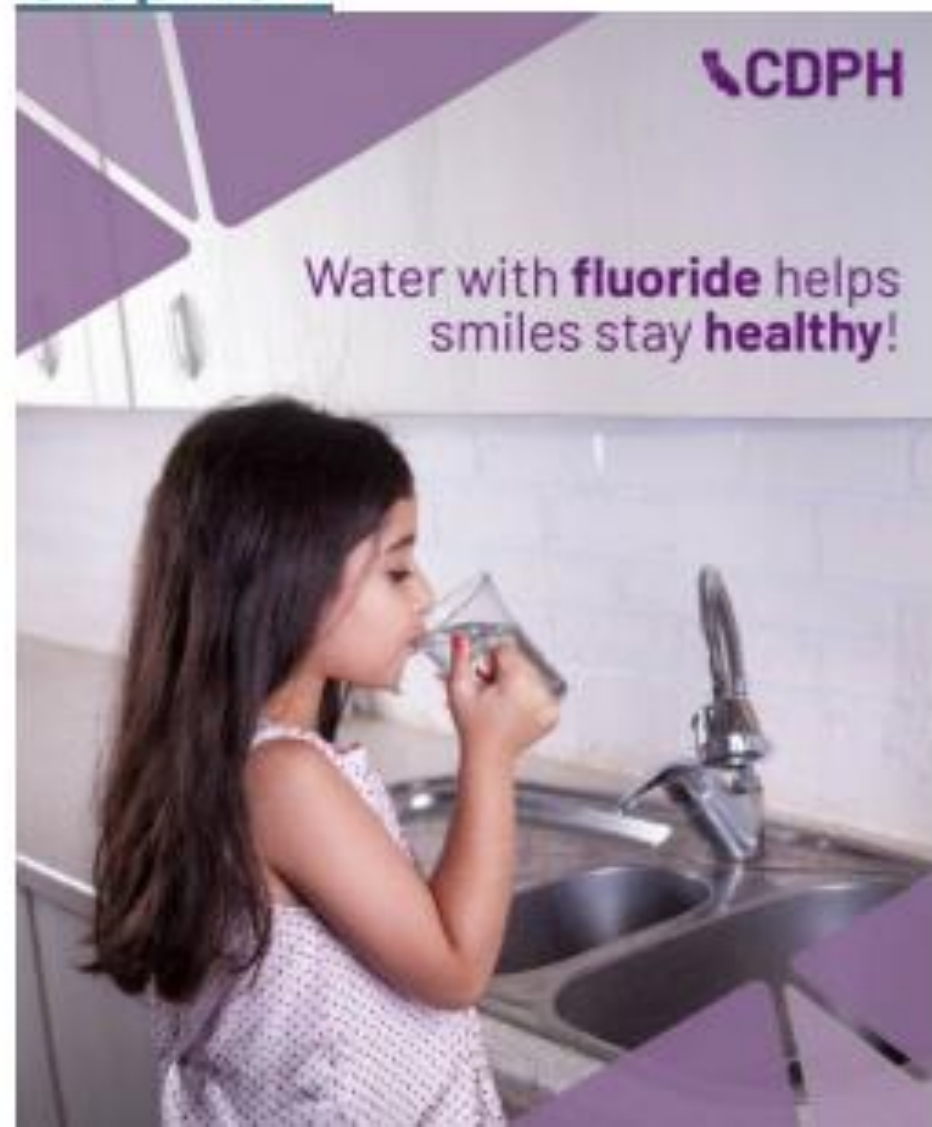
For more information, visit

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CDCB/Pages/OralHealthProgram/Fluoridation.aspx>
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CDCB/Pages/OralHealthProgram/Fluoridation.aspx>

#HealthyTeeth #PublicHealth #SmileStrong

Graphic/link to final video (if available):

Graphic 1



Community Water Fluoridation – Fact Sheet

Situational Background

Community water fluoridation (CWF), a long-standing public health measure, is under renewed scrutiny from some federal agencies and state governments. This follows recent studies raising concerns about potential neurodevelopmental effects at high fluoride exposure levels—well above current U.S. recommended level of 0.7 mg/L. These discussions are unfolding at a time when public health programs are facing significant funding reductions, including cuts to oral health services and dental coverage. In this context, CWF remains a vital, safe, cost-effective preventive initiative—especially for communities with limited access to dental care.

The [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) affirms that CWF is a safe, effective, and cost-saving public health strategy to prevent tooth decay. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recognizes it as one of the top public health achievements of the 20th century. It helps reduce health disparities by benefiting all residents, especially those in underserved communities who may not have regular access to dental care.

Key Talking Points:

Community water fluoridation is a proven, cost-effective public health measure that safely reduces cavities, protects oral health across all ages, and saves

Water Fluoridation Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is fluoride in California drinking water safe?

A: Yes, California's drinking water is safe. Fluoride is maintained at the optimal level of 0.7 mg/L to prevent tooth decay and support good oral health. Fluoride levels are monitored daily to ensure they remain within the state's strict safety level which is even more strict than national EPA standards.

Q: How does fluoride actually prevent cavities?

A: Fluoride helps teeth in two ways: (1) it strengthens teeth enamel so acids from food and bacteria can't break it down as easily, and (2) it repairs tiny weak spots in teeth before they turn into cavities. Drinking fluoridated water means your teeth get this protection all day and night.

Q: I've heard it could affect children's brain development. Is this true?

A: The studies raising concern mostly come from places where natural fluoride levels are much higher than United States, often several times higher.

A: A U.S. study on recommended fluoride levels, published in *Science Advances*, found that children raised with optimal fluoridation show modest cognitive benefits in secondary school.

A: For reference, the U.S. Public Health Service recommends an optimal fluoride concentration of 0.7 mg/L.

How “Fluoride Friends” Can Help You

- <https://oralhealthsupport.ucsf.edu/our-programs/fluoridation>
 - Fluoridation Manual includes supports for maintaining (will update for fluorides)
 - FREE CE for your local water operators (a good reason to reach out to them!)
- Bimonthly Fluoride Work Group

Fluoride Work Group

2nd Wednesday, Odd Months, 11am-12pm

- "State of the state" (including you!) & science updates
 - "Water101"—an introduction to water systems
 - Communication tips
 - Update on research
 - Shared community
- Email oralhealthsupport@ucsf.edu to sign up

West Sacramento Water Treatment Plant



Daly City Water Treatment Plant



Coming Soon

- Handout, to use as an outreach tool to your local water district
- Find your water district here [2025 California County Map: Percentage of Population Served by Community Water Fluoridation](#)
- What else would be helpful to you?

Resources

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CDCB/Pages/OralHealthProgram/OralHealthProgram.aspx>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/Communications-Toolkits/Oral-Health.aspx>

<https://oralhealthsupport.ucsf.edu/our-programs/fluoridation>
(including fluoride manual)

likemyteeth.org

<https://www.cda.org/public-health/category/community-oral-health-resources/dental-disease-prevention/fluoride-and-fluoridation/>

www.ada.org

Fluoride Technical Assistance

Marjorie Stocks
(Community
Organizer and
Communicator)



Mark Bartson, PE
(Water
Operator/
Regulator)

Susan Fisher-Owens

We Look Forward to Partnering with
You!

Susan.Fisher-Owens@UCSF.edu
oralhealthsupport@UCSF.edu

Q&A

Aubri Kottek

Thank You!