

**Q: Why do I have to swallow fluoridated water if most of the effect is a topical one?**

A: For a few reasons. 1. While most of the fluoride effect is topical, a systemic effect still occurs, and enamel with built-in fluoride is still more decay resistant. 2. Fluoride from fluoridated water is found in saliva and provides a wonderful, low concentration fluoride treatment for your teeth. 3. Because it's the safest, most cost effective way to gain the benefits of fluoride

*At Crookes and Jenkins Dental we recognize you may wish to limit your exposure to fluoride. Please ask us about non fluoride based options to help protect you and your family against tooth decay.*

**Q: What is fluorosis?**

A: Dozens of factors (eg trauma, infection, or medication) can cause mottling or staining of teeth, and excess fluoride is just one possible cause. Fluorosis generally presents as a mild or very mild mottling of teeth when high levels of fluoride have been taken in while tooth enamel is forming. Very high levels can even cause brown staining or pitted enamel. This is very uncommon, and usually results from children swallowing too much fluoride from toothpaste or fluoride tablets rather than from drinking fluoridated water. To reduce the chance of fluorosis, health authorities recommend that children use only a small amount of toothpaste on their toothbrush, and rinse after brushing. Water fluoridation is the ideal way of providing the benefits of fluoride, as it delivers very low levels on a regular basis, similar to naturally fluoridated water. It's important to keep fluorosis in perspective. Most fluorosis is mild or very mild, and causes no aesthetic concerns. Decayed and missing teeth on the other hand are much more disfiguring, are a threat to general health and well-being, and effect far more people.

**Good oral hygiene + healthy eating + water fluoridation = good oral health**

**Want to know more?**

**Ask us or visit these following websites:**

**Australian Dental Association**

[www.ada.org.au](http://www.ada.org.au)

**Queensland Health**

[www.health.qld.gov.au/fluoride](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/fluoride)

**World Health Organisation**

[www.who.int/en](http://www.who.int/en)

**Crookes & Jenkins Dental**

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[www.crookesandjenkinsdental.com.au](http://www.crookesandjenkinsdental.com.au)

*\*Information compiled from the following sources  
Australian Dental Association (ADA).  
Queensland Health  
World Health organization*



**CROOKES & JENKINS**  
DENTAL

**General information in preparation for water fluoridation for the South East Qld area.\***

**Q: What is fluoride?**

A: Fluorides are naturally occurring compounds containing fluorine, one of the most common elements in the earth's crust. Fluoride compounds and ions are found naturally in soil, minerals, plants, rivers and all water sources. It is found naturally in seawater at much higher levels than those used in the fluoridation of drinking water. In your body, fluoride helps stabilise the mineral content of bones and teeth and helps prevent tooth decay.

**Q: How does fluoride work?**

A: Fluoride acts in a number of ways to strengthen teeth and make them more resistant to tooth decay. Originally it was thought that the benefits of fluoride were only systemic, ie fluoride being built into a child's developing tooth enamel, making the enamel more resistant to the acid that causes tooth decay. This would have meant that only people exposed to fluoridated water as a child could benefit from water fluoridation. We now know that while some of fluoride's effect is systemic, most is a topical effect, ie fluoride applied directly to the tooth surface and strengthening tooth enamel.

Topical fluoride can not only stop the development of tooth decay, but also make the enamel more resistant to future acid attacks. It also helps by reducing the amount of acid produced by the bacteria in your mouth. Drinking fluoridated water several times a day is the ideal way to give your teeth a quick fluoride treatment.

**Q: Is water fluoridation the best way of providing fluoride?**

A: The benefits of fluoride can be provided in many forms, including fluoridated water, salt, milk, tablets and drops. Many countries, particularly in Europe, that have elected for practical, legal or political reasons not to introduce water fluoridation have encouraged the use of fluoride in other forms. While these are still beneficial, the safest and most cost effective method, with the greatest reduction in tooth decay is seen when teeth are exposed to frequent, low concentrations of fluoride as in water fluoridation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state: "Although other fluoride-containing products are available, water fluoridation remains the most equitable and cost-effective method of delivering fluoride to all members of most communities, regardless of age, educational attainment, or income level." Another landmark study by the University of York (September 2000) reviewed 3200 research articles and concluded that: "water fluoridation has an effect over and above that of fluoridated toothpaste and other sources of fluoride."

**Q: Doesn't water fluoridation just benefit children?**

A: No. Because of the mainly topical effect of fluoride, people of all ages and backgrounds will benefit. With better dental care, older Queenslanders are now keeping their teeth longer. As we age, many factors can result in less saliva, a condition known as "dry mouth". The risk of tooth decay increases with dry mouth, particularly on the softer root surfaces. When fluoride is in the mouth, the teeth become much more resistant to decay. Fluoridated water is the safest, most effective, and least expensive way to reduce tooth decay in children and adults. For example, a 2002 New Zealand report on Preventive Dental Strategies for Older Populations noted that "fluoride was the most important preventive measure available against decay for this group."



**Q: Could I be allergic to fluoride?**

A: After a thorough review of the scientific literature, the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology stated: "There is no evidence of allergy or intolerance to fluorides as used in the fluoridation of community water supplies."

**Will fluoridated water taste or smell different?**

A: No

**Q: Shouldn't we be concentrating on improving people's diets and reducing sugar intake rather than just looking at water fluoridation?**

A: The Australian Dental Association and Australian Medical Association have been advising people for decades to live healthier lives, eat a balanced diet and reduce their sugar intake. This will continue. The introduction of water fluoridation is just one part of improving people's dental health and general health.

**Q: Is water fluoridation cost effective?**

A: Yes. The savings in dental treatment costs to a community by providing water fluoridation are substantial. It has been calculated in the United States that the lifetime cost per person of providing fluoridated water is less than that of a single filling. In 2002, Queensland Health commissioned an independent report into the cost effectiveness of water fluoridation. This 2002 Impact Analysis of Water Fluoridation stated that if all Queensland towns over 5000 people were to be fluoridated, the expected cost benefit to the state over a thirty year equipment lifespan would be more than \$1 billion (at 2002 figures). In 2002, the Victorian Health Minister stated that "...every dollar invested in fluoride saves over \$30 of dental treatment. The cost of dental treatment in Victoria is over \$600 million each year. In the past 25 years fluoridation has saved the Victorian community nearly \$1 billion in avoided dental costs, lost productivity and saved leisure time." In speaking about Sydney's water fluoridation, the New South Wales Chief Health Officer in 2002 reported "a significant dental health benefit, by reducing dental caries, along with the associated savings in the cost of treatment."