

NZDTA Statement on Water Fluoridation

Water Fluoridation is the most cost effective and socially equitable way of ensuring communities benefit from the decay reducing effects of fluoride regardless of ethnicity, age, income or education levels.

It was first introduced into New Zealand in 1954 and New Zealand research published in 2004 confirmed that dental decay was 31 percent lower in 5-year-old children and 41 percent lower in 12-year-old children living in fluoridated Wellington than in non fluoridated Canterbury.

Water fluoridation makes teeth stronger by making tooth enamel more resistant to decay, and by promoting repair of the early stages of tooth decay.

All water and some foods contain fluoride, but in New Zealand this is not usually at the optimum level to prevent tooth decay. Water fluoridation tops up the level of fluoride in the water from the naturally occurring level to the optimum level of between 0.7 and 1 part per million.

Dental Therapists are often the first health professionals to see the effects of tooth decay and manage the pain and suffering caused by dental decay. Abscesses, toothache and extractions are by no means trivial problems and are not something any community should accept as inevitable for children or adults.

The New Zealand Dental Therapists Association supports water fluoridation as a positive, cost effective public health initiative to help reduce dental decay and its devastating effects.

Lee M, Dennison P. NZ Dental Journal. 2004 March; 100(1):10-15

**Treasure ET, Dever JG. Community Dental Oral Epidemiology. 1994 Aug; 22(4);
226-30**

For further information refer to:

www.moh.govt.nz/fluoride