



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

The Department of Health supports community water fluoridation as a sound, population-based public health measure. The decision to add fluoride to a public water system is made by the local community. The department encourages communities to begin and maintain optimal fluoride levels for health benefits in drinking water systems.

Community water fluoridation began in the United States over 75 years ago. Today, fluoridated water systems serve nearly 75 percent of the U.S. population. Water fluoridation is cost-effective, practical, and safe. People who live in communities with fluoridated water are more likely to have healthier teeth than those living in communities without fluoridated water.

Tooth decay is the result of a preventable bacterial disease process that occurs throughout life. Exposure to optimally fluoridated water improves dental health. Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that strengthens the enamel surface of teeth. When in contact with teeth, it helps to repair early signs of tooth decay, hardens the tooth's surface, and slows decay-causing bacteria.

Community water fluoridation is a proven public health prevention measure that benefits both children and adults, regardless of age, race, gender, or income. It is the most effective way to deliver the benefits of fluoride to all community members served. Providing fluoridated water to 77.1% percent of Americans is a goal of the Healthy People 2030 initiative.

The Surgeon General of the United States and over one hundred national and international organizations endorse water fluoridation. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognized fluoridation of drinking water as one of ten great public health achievements of the twentieth century.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett MD MPH".

Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD MPH
Chief Science Officer
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