



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

August 2015

STATEMENT ON 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 fluoridation in drinking water systems.

Community water fluoridation began in the United States 70 years ago. Today, fluoridated water systems serve nearly 75 percent of the U.S. population and 53 percent of Washington State residents. 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 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 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 public health prevention measure that benefits all citizens, regardless of age, race, gender, or income. It is the most effective way to deliver the benefits of fluoride to everyone. Providing fluoridated water to 80% of Americans is a goal of the Healthy People 2020 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 recognizes fluoridation of drinking water as one of ten great public health achievements of the twentieth century.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Lofy".

Kathy Lofy, MD
State Health Officer