FDI POLICY STATEMENT

Promoting Oral Health Through Water Fluoridation

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Water fluoridation is the adjustment of the fluoride concentration in fluoride-deficient water supplies to a level recommended for optimal oral health. More than 370 million people in over 27 countries receive the benefits of water fluoridation.

In recognition of the importance of promoting oral health through water fluoridation, FDI World Dental Federation states that:

- Over 70 years of research and recent systematic reviews have shown that water fluoridation is an effective public health measure for the prevention of dental decay in children and adults.
- Water fluoridation is particularly appropriate for populations demonstrating moderate to high risk of dental decay.
- Water fluoridation confers positive health savings and contributes to reducing disparities in the rates of dental decay in communities.
- At the fluoride concentrations recommended for the prevention of dental decay, scientific research and reviews show that human general health is not adversely affected.
- The public health benefits of water fluoridation in the prevention of dental decay far outweigh the possible occurrence of very mild/mild dental fluorosis.
- In establishing the recommended level of fluoride to be used in water to prevent dental decay, public health authorities should be cognisant of the balance between the prevention of dental decay and dental fluorosis. To do so, public health authorities should take into account the prevailing maximum ambient air temperature, the availability of other sources of fluoride and how they are used, as well as dietary and cultural practices in the community for individuals from infancy through childhood.
- Water supplies to be fluoridated should be reliable and the necessary quality control measures, facilities and expertise available to implement and monitor water fluoridation should be available.
- The dental profession, medical profession, health researchers and public health authorities should continue to research the effectiveness and safety of water fluoridation and other methods of delivering fluoride for the prevention of dental

decay, and this information should be made available to the public in a transparent manner.

Other sources of fluoride are fluoride toothpaste, salt fluoridation, milk fluoridation, fluoride mouth rinses and a range of professionally applied fluoride products. FDI recommends a comprehensive preventive approach as the most appropriate method of reducing the heavy burden of dental decay worldwide and together with WHO supports the use of water fluoridation as an important public health measure.

KEYWORDS

Caries, fluoride, prevention, water

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