

Water Fluoridation

Protecting health and saving money for Louisianians



COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION IS SAFE, EFFECTIVE, AND SAVES MONEY

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that strengthens tooth enamel and reverses early signs of decay. Added in safe, measured amounts to public water supplies, fluoride repairs weak spots before cavities form—helping families stay healthy and avoid costly care. Recognized by leading public health and dental organizations as one of the most successful and cost-effective public health initiatives in history, community water fluoridation has helped keep preventive care more affordable and accessible in Louisiana for decades.

WHY FLUORIDE WORKS

Preventing Problems

Fluoride strengthens enamel and prevents cavities before they start, especially in children, who benefit most from early prevention.

Proven Protection

After decades of research and more than 7,000 studies, the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence shows that fluoridating water at levels approved in the US is safe and effective at preventing tooth decay.

Expanding Access

Fluoride helps people who face barriers to preventive care — including veterans, older adults, rural communities, and residents with limited access to dental providers.

Filling in the Gaps

In Louisiana, 30% of adults lack dental insurance, and 12% have lost six or more teeth — problems that would only get worse if fluoride is removed. Additionally, only 45% of the children in Louisiana who qualify for dental Medicaid go to the dentist.

Making Care Affordable

With limited Medicaid dental coverage for adults and high out-of-pocket costs, fluoride offers low-cost prevention that keeps people healthy and takes pressure off of emergency care.

WHAT LAWMAKERS CAN DO

Protect What Works

Protect existing community water fluoridation programs and oppose legislation that would roll them back.

Keep Systems Strong

Support funding to maintain and modernize water system infrastructure and ensure reliable access to fluoridated water.

Clear Up Confusion

Ensure communities have access to clear, accurate, and evidence-based information about fluoride's safety and value.

THE COST OF REMOVING FLUORIDE

Losing Ground

Removing fluoride would reverse decades of oral health progress — increasing cavities, emergency visits, and treatment costs.

Leaving Money on the Table

Only 38% of Louisianians have access to fluoridated water, leaving many communities without one of the simplest, most cost-effective forms of prevention.

Paying More for Less

Fluoridation costs about \$1 per person per year and delivers a return of roughly \$20 for every dollar invested, saving families and the state from paying more for poorer dental outcomes.

An Expensive Trade-Off

According to the ADA, eliminating fluoridation in Louisiana would cost the state more than \$340 million over five years in avoidable dental expenses.

The Affordability Crisis

Louisiana residents already face steep health care costs. 67% report experiencing at least one affordability burden, and 78% worry about affording care in the future.

Real-World Consequences

Communities that have removed fluoride — including Calgary, Canada, and Juneau, Alaska — saw dental treatment needs and costs spike within just a few years.

Dental Professional Shortage Areas in Louisiana

