

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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Health Insurance Association of America

Endorses Fluoridation

The position statement on fluoridation recently issued by the Health Insurance Company of America is enclosed.

Division of Dental Health
Preventive Practices Branch
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Enclosure

POSITION STATEMENT ON FLUORIDATION

BY THE HEALTH INSURANCE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Health Insurance Association of America, as an organization of an industry dedicated to providing adequate coverage to all people, believes that the preventive benefits derived from fluoridation will not only reduce future expenditures necessary for appropriate dental care, but will enhance the overall health and well-being of our citizens.

The Health Insurance Association of America, as a national organization interested in the betterment of the health of our populations, endorses the following recommendation on fluoridation of the American Dental Association.

American Dental Association's Stand on Fluoridation

The following is the American Dental Association's stand on fluoridation:

"The American Dental Association unreservedly endorses the fluoridation of community water supplies within the standards established by the U.S. Public Health Service and the state and local public health authorities. This endorsement of the community fluoridation procedure has been an official policy of the Association since the year 1950. In 1953, the Association's House of Delegates reaffirmed its outright support for the fluoridation procedure.

"The 1953 resolution adopted unanimously by the House of Delegates said:

"Resolved, that the American Dental Association reiterate its recommendation that all local communities be urged to adjust the fluoride content of their public water supplies to the level recommended by responsible state and local health authorities.

"The American Dental Association established its position in support of the fluoridation procedure only after many years were spent by Association agencies and scientist consultants in the evaluation of all available data regarding the safety and effectiveness of the measure.

"The American Dental Association's endorsement indicates the conviction that no harmful effects will accrue to persons from the use of a properly fluoridated water supply. The Association has also stated its conviction that up to 60 per cent of dental decay that might otherwise have occurred will be prevented in those persons who use fluoridated water from early childhood."

Fluoridation Defined

Fluoridation is defined as simply the adjustment of a water supply to a fluoride content that significantly reduces the incidence and prevalence of dental caries.

Benefits of Fluoridation

Fluoridation, according to the American Dental Association, when occurring at the recommended level of one part per million, reduces the incidence of dental caries from 50 to 70 per cent without damage to teeth or any other cell, tissue or organ of the body.

As such, the American Dental Association reports that there are no observable effects on the taste, odor, hardness or acidity-alkalinity balance of water when the fluoride content is at the recommended level of one part per million. Moreover, an additional benefit that appears to result from fluoridation is in helping to alleviate osteoporosis in our older age groups. In the area of reducing tooth decay, fluoridation has been acknowledged as one of the most effective public health measures for controlling one of the most widespread chronic illnesses of man.

Furthermore, the abilities of the limited supply of dentists to treat those in need of dental care, add to the importance of fluoridation as an established preventive measure for reducing tooth decay.

Costs of Fluoridation

The aforementioned authority reports that the costs for adding fluorides to a municipal water supply is minimal. The differential between dollars invested over the years for fluoridation against the cost of repairing tooth decay is substantial. In view of the savings that would accrue to the purchaser of health services, this would appear to be most significant and worthwhile.