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DENTAL HEALTH LOSSES FROM DISCONTINUATION OF FLUORIDATION

ANTIGO, WISCONSIN

Fluoridation was instituted in Antigo, Wisconsin, in 1949. Eleven years later, a dental survey of school children showed that rates of decayed, missing, and filled teeth were comparable to those of other fluoridated areas in the state. Fluoridation was discontinued in 1960. Four years after fluoridation was stopped, additional dental surveys showed that children in the lower grades were experiencing a definite regression, with increased rates of tooth decay approaching those found in nonfluoridated areas. Fluoridation was reinstituted in Antigo in 1965.

AUSTIN, MINNESOTA

Fluoridation was instituted in Austin, Minnesota, in 1952. Dental examinations of school children showed a gradual reduction in the incidence of tooth decay over succeeding years until 1956, when fluoridation was discontinued. Annual dental surveys were continued, and within a few years increases in tooth decay among the youngest school children became evident. Fluoridation was reinstituted in Austin in 1969.

KILMARNOCK, SCOTLAND

Fluoridation of the Kilmarnock, Scotland, water supply began in April 1956 and was discontinued in October 1962. A series of dental health surveys made among children there, during and after the 6½-year period of fluoridation, showed that the occurrence of tooth decay declined while fluoridation was practiced, but subsequently took an upward trend after fluoridation was discontinued.

WILLIAMSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA

In 1966, the local Water Authority, with the authorization of the Williamsport City Council and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, began fluoridation of the water supply. Later actions by the Council and the Water Authority led to an Authority decision in 1970 to discontinue fluoridation. The Pennsylvania Department of Health and some Williamsport citizens sought a court injunction prohibiting discontinuance. The court held that the action of the city to discontinue violated state health law and was made without regard to the public health gains provided by fluoridation. The court's opinion specifically noted that discontinuance would result in "immediate and continuing irreparable injury to the health of the public, especially to that of children," and the court's order permanently enjoined the Authority from discontinuing fluoridation.

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