What is Community Water Fluoridation?

Fluoride, nature’s cavity fighter, is a mineral that occurs naturally on earth. It is released from rocks into the soil, water, and air. All water contains some fluoride. However, the fluoride level in water is usually not enough to prevent tooth decay. Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) is the process of adjusting the amount of fluoride found in public water supplies to achieve optimal prevention of tooth decay.

CWF Health Benefits

- For children: prevents tooth decay
- For adults: supports tooth enamel
- Reduces cavities by 20% to 40%
- Less severe cavities
- Less need for fillings and removing teeth
- Prevents dental disease

CWF Cost Benefits

- For individuals: the lifetime cost of fluoridation is less than the cost of one dental filling
- For communities: every $1 spent on fluoridation saves $4 to $27 in dental treatment costs

CWF benefits everyone. Most importantly, it benefits those without access to regular dental care. CWF is the most efficient, safe and cost-effective way to prevent tooth decay. Residents without CWF experience more dental problems than residents with CWF. This causes both the healthcare system and families in these communities to spend more money on dental appointments, treatment, and emergencies. In addition, residents without CWF are more likely to miss school and work due to preventable dental issues.

Community Water Fluoridation in Louisiana

Currently, there are 1,022 Community Water Systems (CWS) in LA. 48 water systems have 5000+ water connections and are eligible for CWF. 18 of these systems are practicing CWF. 30 of these systems include no fluoride.

CWS with Fluoride

Assumption Parish WW District 1 | City of Bossier City Water System | Shreveport Water System | City of Lake Charles Water System | Calcasieu Parish WW District No 1 | E. Jefferson WW District 1 | Gretna Waterworks | W. Jefferson WW District 2 | Lafourche Water District 1 | Thibodaux Waterworks | Natchitoches Water System | New Orleans Algiers Water Works | New Orleans Carrollton WW | Belle Chasse Water District | St. Charles Water District 1 | St. Charles Water District 2 | West Bank | Houma Water Treatment Service Area | Schriever Water Treatment Service Area

CWS without Fluoride


2,111,811
# of residents with CWF

2,673,187
# of residents without CWF

44%
% of residents with CWF

56%
% of residents without CWF
Well-Ahead Louisiana Fluoridation Efforts

Well-Ahead Louisiana promotes and educates communities on the effectiveness of water fluoridation. We hope to continue to increase Community Water Fluoridation throughout Louisiana. Efforts to increase fluoridation are executed through the following strategies:

- Frequently giving presentations to water system operators/managers, local municipalities, community and civic organizations highlighting the importance of Community Water Fluoridation
- Performing annual inspections to current fluoridating water systems to ensure safe protocols
- Ensuring systems are adhering to the regulations established in the LAC, Title 78, Subpart 5
- Reporting optimal water levels monthly to the CDC
- Oversseing the Annual Water Fluoridation Quality Award process
- Establishing a specific fluoridation work group
- Collaborating with Louisiana’s Safe Drinking Water Program to secure possible funding
- Applying for the Oral Health Workforce Grant in 2018 to secure possible funding
- Working with state leadership for support to obtain state funding to initiate more fluoridation

Accomplishments: Between 2012 and 2015, through HRSA grant funding, the Water Fluoridation Coalition was able to contribute to the water fluoridation efforts in two of Louisiana’s largest communities.

- In the City of Sulphur, Well-Ahead Louisiana provided $100,000. These funds were used to purchase the required equipment to re-initiate water fluoridation. Thus, we were able to provide water fluoridation to 7,500 residents.
- In the City of Gonzales, Well-Ahead Louisiana provided $90,000. These funds not only provided necessary modifications for two wells in the city, but also initiated fluoridation at a third well. Thus, we were able to provide water fluoridation to 10,300 residents.

In addition, in 2014, 13 Louisiana community water systems received the Annual Water Fluoridation Quality Award from CDC. In 2015, Louisiana’s award count increased to 18!

Funding: Act 761 of the Louisiana 2008 Regular Session required LDH to provide funding (when available) to assist communities to initiate water fluoridation. Currently, Well-Ahead Louisiana does not have funding to support this mandate. Well-Ahead Louisiana’s fluoridation efforts are dependent upon federal grant support (HRSA), which ended in August 2015. In 2018, Well-Ahead will apply for the HRSA Oral Health Workforce Grant to secure potential funding.

Let’s Compare!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of water systems in the state</td>
<td>1022</td>
<td># of naturally fluoridated systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of fluoridated systems</td>
<td>123</td>
<td># of optimally fluoridated systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of residents with fluoridation</td>
<td>2,111,811</td>
<td># of residents without fluoridation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Fluoridation Rank</th>
<th>% Fluoridated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>96.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>93.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74.40%</td>
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</tbody>
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To promote dental health for children on Medicaid, New York uses Medicaid to fund community water fluoridation. Medicaid funds are used for equipment, chemical additives, supplies, and staff time in cities of over 50,000 where the majority of Medicaid eligible children reside.