

## FLUORIDE FOR ADULTS

Why do people of all ages, especially older adults, need fluoride? Fluoride can save their teeth from decay, infection and extraction. With the older adult population on the rise and advancements in dentistry, people are keeping their teeth decades longer than past generations. Still, caries (cavities) are a major threat.

### What are the benefits of fluoride?

Fluoride helps to...

- Reverse or stop tooth decay
- Prevent cavities
- Maintain strong tooth enamel by inhibiting mineral loss
- Keep permanent teeth intact

### How much fluoride do adults need?

That depends. The two usual sources of fluoride are toothpaste and community drinking water. If you have access to both, you're getting an adequate amount. But, some adults need supplementation due to lack of fluoride in the water supply or low salivary flow. (Saliva helps keep your teeth clean, but when salivary flow is interrupted cavities can occur more frequently due to increased bacterial levels.)

### Is fluoridated water safe?

Fluoridation of drinking water is considered one of the greatest achievements in public health?it has helped prevent tooth decay in millions of people and continues to be one of best shields against decay and cavities. In 2012, 74.6% of the US population on public water systems received fluoridated public water, a total of 210 million people. The Healthy People 2020 goal is for 79.6% of the population on public water systems to have access to fluoridated drinking water.

### If drinking water isn't providing enough fluoride, what can people use as an alternative?

Yearly or bi-yearly in-office fluoride treatments from a dentist, or at-home fluoride treatment gels or toothpastes can be prescribed. There are also many fluoride rinses available over the counter that provide adequate amounts if used once or twice daily.

Sources:

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