

What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a naturally occurring compound derived from fluorine, the 13th most abundant element on Earth. It is found in many rocks and minerals in the soil and enters drinking water as water passes through these soils.

Fluoride is present naturally in almost all foods and beverages including water, but levels can vary widely. As fluoride can prevent tooth decay, it is sometimes added to drinking water in a process known as fluoridation. However, in Idaho, fluoridation is not common.

This brochure provides answers to some commonly asked questions about fluoride. For more information about fluoride, visit DEQ's website and other web resources listed inside this brochure.

For More Information

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Bureau of Community and Environmental Health

450 West State Street
Boise, ID 83720
(208) 334-5927

Public Health Districts

Panhandle Health District

8500 N. Atlas Road
Hayden, ID 83835
(208) 415-5100

North Central District Health

215 10th Street
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-3100

Central District Health

707 North Armstrong Place
Boise, ID 83704
(208) 375-5211

South Central District Health

1020 Washington Street N.
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 734-5900

Southeastern District Health

1901 Alvin Ricken Drive
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 233-9080

Eastern Idaho Public Health District

1250 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, ID 83401
(208) 522-0310

Southwest District Health

13307 Miami Lane
Caldwell, ID 83607
(208) 455-5300

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Boise

1445 N. Orchard
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0550
toll-free: (888) 800-3480

Coeur d'Alene

2110 Ironwood Parkway
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422
toll-free: (877) 370-0017

Idaho Falls

900 N. Skyline, Suite B
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 528-2650
toll-free: (800) 232-4635

Lewiston

1118 F Street
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-4370
toll-free: (877) 541-3304

Pocatello

444 Hospital Way #300
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 236-6160
toll-free: (888) 655-6160

Twin Falls

650 Addison Ave. W, Suite 110
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 736-2190
toll-free: (800) 270-1663



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Drinking Water in Idaho

Basic Information: Fluoride in Your Drinking Water



Idaho Department of
Environmental Quality
www.deq.idaho.gov



Why is fluoride in drinking water regulated?

Fluoride has been shown to prevent tooth decay, but too much fluoride at an early age, while the teeth are forming, can cause discoloration and pitting of the teeth. This condition is known as dental fluorosis. Overexposure to fluoride over a lifetime can lead to certain types of bone disease.

How do I know how much fluoride is in my water?

There are several ways to determine the general fluoride concentrations in your area. If your water comes from a public water system, ask your water provider. If you have a private well, you will need to have your water tested by a qualified lab to determine your fluoride concentrations.

Visit the *Fluoride in Drinking Water* program page on DEQ's website (see Web Resources at right) to link to an online listing of the latest test results in your area.

What if I have too much fluoride in my drinking water?

If you have been advised by a professional that the concentration of fluoride in your drinking water is too high, it may be necessary to drink only bottled or properly treated water. (See DEQ's fluoride webpage for treatment options.)

Does bottled water contain fluoride?

Bottled water is regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and must meet federal drinking water standards for regulated contaminants.



Some bottled water contains natural levels of fluoride from the location where it was collected. Some companies add fluoride to their bottled water, and must say so on the label. Consumers who purchase bottled water should carefully read the label or contact the bottler to understand what they are buying, such as the source of water, the method of treatment, and the fluoride level.

How do I test my drinking water?

Your local health department can assist you in testing your drinking water (see office locations on back). Generally, you will need to follow some simple instructions and take a sample of water to a qualified lab for testing. Discuss any concerns you have regarding the results with your dentist, physician, or health department.

For a list of certified labs in your area, visit the Bureau of Laboratories website at www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/Labs/CertificationDrinkingWaterLabs/tabid/1833/Default.aspx.

Who can I contact for more information?

For questions about regulated contaminants in public water systems, contact DEQ (see office locations on back).

For oral health questions, your dentist or physician is an excellent place to start. These medical professionals can help you decide what your fluoride needs are. Children and adults have very different fluoride needs, so be sure to discuss the needs of all family members. Your local health department and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare can also help you decide what steps, if any, you need to take.

Web Resources

Fluoride in Drinking Water

DEQ Website: www.deq.idaho.gov/fluoride

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Oral Health Program

www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/OralHealth/tabid/106/Default.aspx

List of Idaho Health Districts and their Websites

www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/HealthDistrict/tabid/97/default.aspx

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/

American Dental Association Fluoride and Fluoridation Information

www.ada.org/fluoride.aspx

American Dental Association Bottled Water Information

www.ada.org/3048.aspx?currentTab=1