

Fluoridation Fact Sheet

What is fluoride?

Fluoride is the electrically charged atom (or “ion”) that makes up the naturally occurring element fluorine. Although fluoride comes from fluorine, its properties are very different, just like chloride in common table salt is very different from chlorine. Most sources of drinking water contain some naturally occurring fluoride.

What is fluoridation?

Fluoridation is the addition of fluoride to a drinking water supply so that it contains the level recommended for optimal protection against tooth decay.

What agencies will be fluoridating their water supplies?

The Metropolitan Water District’s Board of Directors voted in February 2003 to fluoridate its water supplies at all of its water treatment facilities.

Why is MWD going to fluoridate its water?

A state law came into effect in October 1995 conditionally requiring fluoridation of any public water supply with at least 10,000 customers when funds in the form of grants become available. Public health officials in MWD’s service area pressed hard for large-scale fluoridation at MWD’s treatment plants.

When will MWD begin fluoridating?

Scheduled for December 2007

How does this action impact San Diego County?

The San Diego County Water Authority (Authority), which supplies the majority of the water to the region, purchases treated and untreated water from MWD. Water agencies that purchase treated water from the Authority will receive MWD’s fluoridated water.

How are customers of the San Dieguito Water District (SDWD) affected?

Over 95% of the time, SDWD’s water supply will not be fluoridated. Fluoridated water will only be utilized for short durations when normal untreated water supplies are unavailable.

Why isn’t SDWD going to fluoridate water?

Water agencies that receive capital funding in the form of grants are mandated by the state law to fluoridate. SDWD has not been offered funding to retrofit its treatment plant.

Is there any fluoride in SDWD’s water now?

Yes, there is a naturally occurring amount of fluoride in the water we treat that is typically in the range of 0.2-0.4 parts per million. Fluoride levels in treated, fluoridated water will range from 0.7-0.8 parts per million.

Are there any San Diego County water agencies that currently fluoridate their water?

Yes, the City of Escondido fluoridates its water.

Where can I get more information about fluoridation?

American Dental Association at <http://www.ada.org/public/topics/fluoride/news.asp>

California Department of Public Health at

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/drinkingwater/Pages/Fluoridation.aspx>

