

Public Health Package:

# Supporting Community Water Fluoridation in West Hants Regional Municipality

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June 10, 2025

West Hants Regional Municipality  
76 Morison Dr., P.O. Box 3000  
Windsor, NS B0N 2T0

**RE: Supporting the Introduction of Water Fluoridation in West Hants Regional Municipality**

Dear West Hants Regional Municipal Council,

Central Zone Public Health was invited to present to West Hants Regional Municipal Council on the benefits of community water fluoridation. Public Health strongly supports the use of fluoride in municipal water systems to help prevent tooth decay and promote oral health in residents. It is our hope that tonight's presentation opens a conversation about community water fluoridation as an opportunity to create significant and lasting health benefits for residents in West Hants.

Community water fluoridation is an important, safe and effective measure to improve oral health, which is essential to overall health and well-being at every age and stage of life. Adding fluoride to water is one of the most cost-effective and equitable public health interventions available, reaching everyone in a community regardless of their age, income or access to dental care services or supplies.

We recognize that water fluoridation is a complex issue, and you may have questions or concerns. We invite you to review the supporting documents provided in this package to inform and support potential future discussions on community water fluoridation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this package and show how community water fluoridation remains instrumental for Nova Scotians. If there is interest from Council to explore community water fluoridation further, Public Health would welcome continued collaboration and partnership with West Hants Regional Municipality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "CRL Brown".

Dr. Catherine Brown  
Regional Medical Officer of Health, Central Zone Public Health  
Nova Scotia Health

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shadford".

Shelley Radford  
Director, Central Zone Public Health  
Nova Scotia Health

West Hants Regional Municipal Council| June 10, 2025

# Why Public Health, Nova Scotia Dental Association, and Partners Recommend Community Water Fluoridation

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**Dr Catherine Brown, MD MSc CCFP FRCPC**

Regional Medical Officer of Health, Central Zone Public Health

**Dr Kevin Walsh, DDS, B.Sc.**

Past President, Nova Scotia Dental Association

Dr. Kevin Walsh Dentistry Inc, Windsor, NS



# Purpose

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- To highlight the individual health, population health, and health equity benefits of community water fluoridation (CWF)
- To start a conversation about CWF as an opportunity to create significant and lasting health impacts for residents of West Hants

# What is community water fluoridation?

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Community water fluoridation (CWF) is the process of monitoring and adjusting the fluoride level in drinking water to the optimal level **for prevention of dental decay**

CWF is:

- Considered **one of the ten greatest public health achievements** of the 20th century
- Endorsed by major public health bodies around the world
- The **most cost effective and equitable method to deliver fluoride** to the population
- Contributing to oral health equity by overcoming common social determinants of health including age, education, income, and access to professional dental care
- Associated with an **approximate 25% reduction in tooth decay** in children and adults

Learn more:

[The State of Community Water Fluoridation across Canada - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/fluoridation)

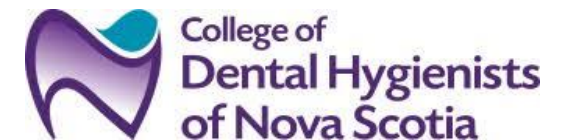
# Organizations who endorse CWF

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**CWF is endorsed by more than 90 provincial, national, and international professional organizations, associations, and governments**

**In Nova Scotia, this includes:**

- IWK Health – Department of Dentistry
- Dalhousie University – Faculty of Dentistry
- Nova Scotia Health – Public Health
- Department of Health & Wellness – Public Health Branch
- Nova Scotia Dental Association
- College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia



Learn more:

[The State of Community Water Fluoridation across Canada - Canada.ca](https://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/fluoridation)



**Public Health**

# Municipalities and health

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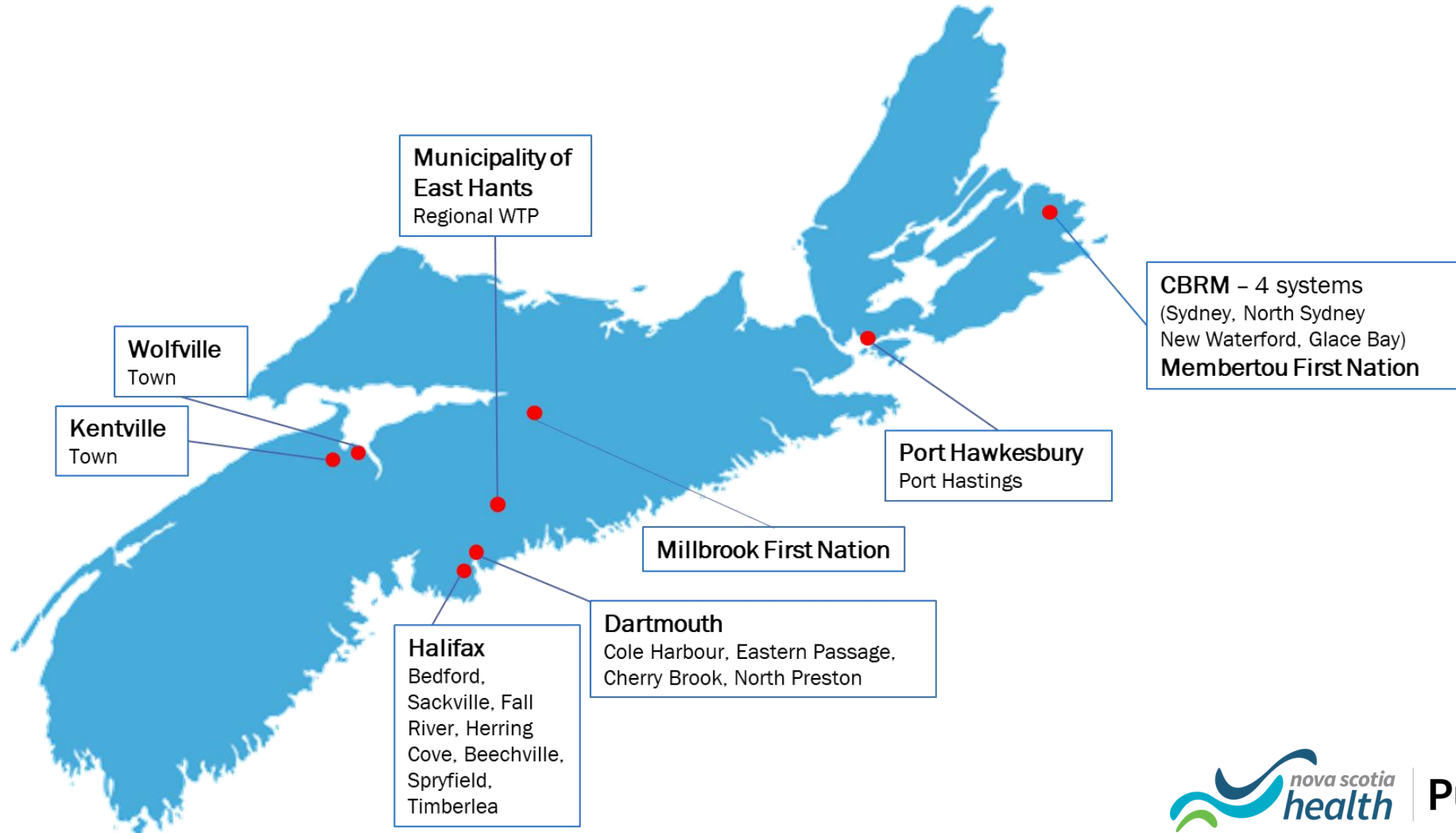
**Health is the result of social and economic factors and conditions that influence the daily environments in which we live, work, play, learn, and grow**

West Hants Regional Municipality plays an important role in supporting community health through municipal planning, programs, and services:

- The Inspire Fund
- Hants Country Exhibition Arena transformation
- Switch West Hants
- Active Transportation Policy
- Community Milestone Recognition Policy

# CWF offered in many communities across NS

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# West Hants Water Utility

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West Hants Water Utility includes **3 Water Treatment Plants:**

- **Windsor Water Treatment Plant** –serves Three Miles Plains, Garlands Crossing, Curry's Corner and Wentworth Road
  - CWF discontinued in 2002 when agent to remove iron from drinking water prioritized
- **Falmouth Water Treatment Plant** – serves Falmouth and Upper Falmouth
- **Hantsport Water Treatment Plant** – serves Hantsport, Hants Borden and Gloucecap First Nations

Approximately 1/3 of West Hants population is supplied by West Hants Water Utility

Learn more:

[Water Treatment Plants | GovernmentThe Regional Municipality of Windsor-West Hants](#)

# Why Community Water Fluoridation?

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- **Preventative Approach:** It's the most impactful tool to prevent tooth decay before treatment is required
- **Equitable:** It improves oral health for everyone, regardless of age, income, or access to dental care services & supplies
- **Regulated and Monitored:** To ensure optimal fluoride levels always maintained
- **Safe:** Decades of research support safety
- **Cost-Effective:** Every dollar spent on CWF saves \$5.49 to \$93.19

Learn more:

[The State of Community Water Fluoridation across Canada - Canada.ca](https://canada.ca/en/health-services/public-health/fluoridation)

# The Shocking Statistics...

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- Dental caries is the most common chronic childhood disease
- Dental procedures are the **most common reason** preschool children require general anesthesia
- **Over 30% of pediatric day surgical time** in Canada is consumed by dental treatment

Learn more:  
[CIHI | Treatment of Preventable Dental Cavities in Preschoolers](#)

# Consequences of Dental Decay

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Dental decay can be invasive in a person and their family's daily life due to:

- Pain
- Infection
- Sleep disturbances – cascading impacts on growth and development
- Lost time at work & school
- Damage to developing adult teeth structure/alignment



**Dental decay impacts all ages and stages across the life span**

Learn more:

[Oral health for adults - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-services/minister-of-health/2018/05/oral-health-for-adults.html)

[Oral health for children - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-services/minister-of-health/2018/05/oral-health-for-children.html)

[Canadian Dental Association](https://www.cda.ca/)

# How does fluoride prevent dental decay?

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Fluoride is a mineral that is found naturally in water, soil, plants, and food, and is added to various dental products. **It strengthens teeth and prevents tooth decay.**

Community water fluoridation delivers two kinds of fluoride protection against tooth decay:

- 1. Topically:** When the outside of teeth come in direct contact with the fluoride in drinking water
- 2. Systemically:** When fluoridated water is consumed, fluoride is made available inside the body to become part of tooth's structure while it is still developing

**Evidence shows that receiving fluoride in both ways leads to greater benefits in reducing tooth decay**

Learn more:

[Fluoride: Topical and Systemic Supplements | American Dental Association Infographic Community Water Fluoridation Dec 11 2024.pdf](#)

# Consequences of CWF removal in Windsor

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- Dr. Walsh started practicing in Windsor in 1994
- It was remarkable how many fewer cavities the children in Windsor had in comparison to surrounding communities
- This observation was shared by his predecessor, Dr. Alan Stewart who retired in 1994
- Several years after CWF was removed in 2002 this discrepancy levelled out
- Currently there is no difference between cavity rates in Windsor vs surrounding communities

# CWF is equitable

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- Canadians living with low-income are almost **twice as likely** to suffer from poor oral health compared to high income Canadians
- Water fluoridation is a **cost-effective measure** to narrow the gap when it comes to oral health and tooth decay
- CWF **benefits all residents in a community**, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, education, oral hygiene practices, employment or access to routine dental care, making it a truly equitable public health practice

Learn more:

[Position statement on Community Water Fluoridation - Canada.ca](#)

[The State of Community Water Fluoridation across Canada - Canada.ca](#)

# Observations from a Public Health Dental Hygienist

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- Typically, PH sees about a 70-80% participation rate for the FVP at West Hants schools
- Students present with a **high quantity of caps and fillings**
  - About 5-20 students per school have untreated decay and require dental treatment
- **Accessibility and transportation seem to be the biggest barriers** to access dental care
- Many are on are wait lists for sedation and dental surgery
- The schools are very supportive of the FVP

## What is the Fluoride Varnish Program (FVP)?

The FVP is a Public Health program that offers two extra applications of fluoride to teeth for students in pre-primary to grade 6 in selected elementary schools in communities who would benefit most from additional opportunities to receive fluoride

For more information:

[Oral Health | Nova Scotia Health](#)

# Challenges in rural communities

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- **Affordability** – choosing to feed a family rather than pay for dental visits has become a reality in many households
- **Rural residents face barriers to accessing dental services** due to distance, lack of public transportation, and fewer dental offices in their areas adding to costs
  - Within West Hants most dentists aren't taking on new patients, even if they qualify for the Canadian Dental Care Plan
- **Limited access to care can lead to delayed diagnosis and treatment** of dental problems, resulting in more severe and costly issues later on
- Access to fluoridated water can significantly reduce the risk of dental decay

Learn more:

[Children's Oral Health and Barriers to Seeking Care: Perspectives of Caregivers Seeking Pediatric Hospital Dental Treatment - PMC](#)

[NSDA Oral Health Report 2024](#)

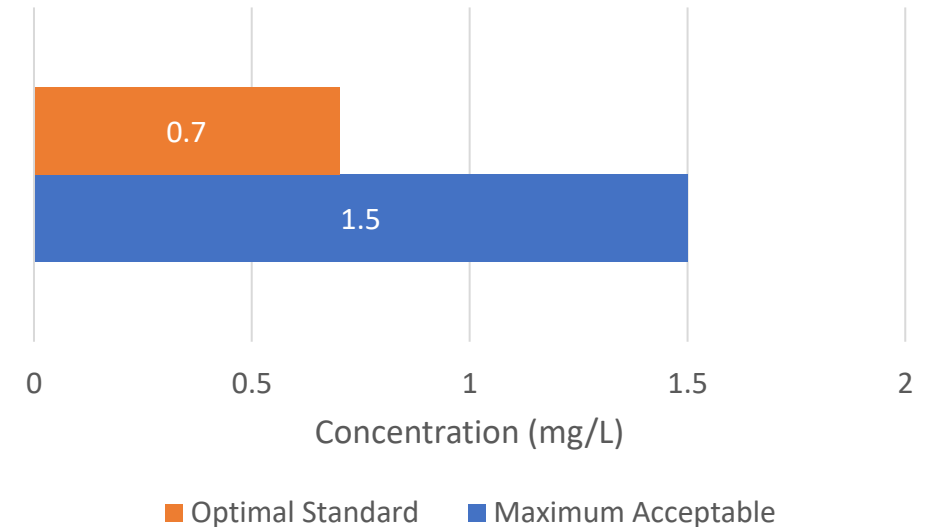
[Rural-urban differences in dental service utilization and dental service procedures received among US Adults: Results from the 2016 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey - PMC](#)

# CWF is regulated and monitored

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- The Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality has established the maximum acceptable concentration of fluoride in drinking water at 1.5 mg/L
- Health Canada set optimal standard for CWF at 0.7mg/L, less than half of the maximum level
  - This accounts for fluoride coming from other sources (e.g., access to dental treatments, toothpaste, mouth rinses, etc.)
- **In NS, municipal water supply plants that offer CWF test drinking water daily to ensure optimal fluoride levels are maintained**

Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines for Fluoride



Learn more:

[Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality: Fluoride Guideline Technical Document](#)  
[NS Treatment Standards for Municipal Drinking Water Systems](#)

# CWF is safe

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- **Decades of extensive research has shown that CWF is safe** when optimal fluoride concentrations (0.7 mg/L), less than half of the regulated level, are maintained
- Repeated exposure to fluoride at higher levels than Canada's regulated maximum (1.5 mg/L) has been associated with potential risks. Daily monitoring prevents this from occurring in Nova Scotia
- NSH Public Health and many others (including Health Canada) closely monitor new research on water fluoridation to inform recommendations
  - Emerging evidence is not strong enough to change water fluoridation guidelines

Learn more:

[Fluoride and Oral Health - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/fluoride/oral-health.html)

# CWF is cost-effective

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## **Dental services are expensive**

- In 2018, the cost of dental services was estimated to be approximately \$17 billion in Canada, about \$461 per Canadian

## **CWF has a high return on investment**

- Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) estimates on average, introduction of CWF generates net savings at societal level annually of \$34.49 per person per year for "average" small urban municipalities (pop 4,857)

Learn more:

Community Water Fluoridation Programs: A Health Technology Assessment — Budget Impact Analysis.  
Ottawa: CADTH; 2019 Feb. (CADTH technology review; no. 13).

# Cautionary Tale of CWF Cessation in Calgary

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City of Calgary ceased CWF in 2011 after the previous fluoride infrastructure reached the end of its lifecycle and was decommissioned and removed. At the same time, CWF continued in Edmonton

Multiple comparison studies between Calgary and Edmonton have shown:

- Fluoride cessation negatively impacted children's dental health in Calgary
- At least 25% more tooth decay was seen, with more burden in kids living in families with low-income
- Significant increase in dental cost and surgery under general anesthetic

**In light of these outcomes, and with public support, the City of Calgary will be reintroducing fluoride to its water supply on June 30, 2025**

Learn more:

[Fluoride in Calgary's water](#)

# Key Takeaways

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- Community water fluoridation **improves oral health** and supports the overall health of a community
- CWF remains a **safe, cost effective, and equitable** public health practice and an important tool in protecting and maintaining the health and well-being of Nova Scotians
- West Hants Regional Municipality has an **opportunity to create significant and lasting impacts** through investment in CWF systems, creating generations of healthier residents
- If there is interest from council to explore CWF further, Public Health and dental partners would welcome the opportunity to continue the conversation

# Thank you!

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We welcome any questions and discussion

Dr. Catherine Brown – Public Health  
[CatherineR.brown@nshealth.ca](mailto:CatherineR.brown@nshealth.ca)

Dr. Kevin Walsh – Dentist  
[drkevin@eastlink.ca](mailto:drkevin@eastlink.ca)



# CWF in Nova Scotia

## **Kentville Water Commission**

875 West Main Street

Kentville, NS

902-679-2520

[Kentville Water Commission |  
Nova Scotia Utility and Review  
Board](#)

## **Wolfville Water Utility**

200 Dykeland Street

Wolfville NS

902-542-3294

[Town of Wolfville Water  
Utility | Nova Scotia Utility  
and Review Board](#)

## **CBRM Water Utility**

Suite 302, 320

Esplanade

Sydney, NS

[Water Utility](#)

## **Halifax Water Commission**

450 Cowie Hill Road

Halifax, NS

902-420-9287

[Welcome to Halifax Water |  
Halifax Water](#)

## **Town of Port Hawkesbury Water Utility**

606 Reeves Street,

Port Hawkesbury, NS

902-625- 1975

[Town of Port Hawkesbury  
Water Utility | Nova Scotia  
Utility and Review Board](#)

## **East Hants Water Utility**

170-15 Commerce Court

Elmsdale, NS

902-883-2299

[Water Utility Information -  
Municipality of East Hants](#)

# Additional Resources on CWF

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## **Nova Scotia**

- [Oral Health | Nova Scotia Health](#)
- [Oral Health for Providers | Information and Wellness Portal](#)
- [NS Treatment Standards for Municipal Drinking Water Systems](#)
- [Oral Health Reports – Nova Scotia Dental Association](#)

## **Canadian Dental & Dental Hygienist Association**

- [Canadian Dental Association – Position on Water Fluoridation](#)
- [CDHA Advocacy – Community Water Fluoridation](#)
- [Canadian Dental Association – Your Oral Health](#)

# Additional Resources on CWF

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## **Government of Canada – Public Resources on Oral Health & Fluoride**

- [Fluoride and Oral Health - Canada.ca](#)
- [Oral health for adults - Canada.ca](#)
- [Oral health for children - Canada.ca](#)
- [Fact sheet - Community water fluoridation - Canada.ca](#)

## **Government of Canada – Guidelines & Reports**

- [Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality: Fluoride Guideline Technical Document](#)
- [Position statement on Community Water Fluoridation - Canada.ca](#)
- [State of Community Water Fluoridation across Canada](#)
- [Expert panel meeting on the health effects of fluoride in drinking water: Summary report - Canada.ca](#)

# Additional Resources on CWF

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## International Organizations

- [World Health Organization - Fluoride in drinking-water](#)
- [Community Water Fluoridation Recommendations | Fluoridation | CDC](#)
- [Community Water Fluoridation Frequently Asked Questions | Fluoridation | CDC](#)
- [Cavities: Community Water Fluoridation | The Community Guide](#)

## CADTH & CIHI Reports

- Community Water Fluoridation Programs: A Health Technology Assessment — Budget Impact Analysis. Ottawa: CADTH; 2019 Feb. (CADTH technology review; no. 13).
- [Treatment of Preventable Dental Cavities in Preschoolers: A Focus on Day Surgery Under General Anesthesia](#)

## Fluoride and Community Water Fluoridation

These Frequently Asked Questions help to address common concerns and questions regarding fluoride and community water fluoridation in Nova Scotia.

### **Why is oral health important?**

Oral health is important to overall health and well-being at every age and stage of life. A healthy mouth allows a person to eat, speak, learn and socialize without discomfort or embarrassment.

Tooth decay is the most common childhood chronic disease in Canada that can be prevented. 57% of Canadian children have cavities, which can lead to unnecessary infection, pain, and tooth loss. This can impact children's growth and development, behaviour, and ability to learn, socialize and play.

### **What is fluoride?**

Fluoride is a mineral that strengthens teeth, making them more resistant to decay. Fluoride is naturally occurring in water, soil, plants and food, and is added to various dental products.

### **How does fluoride prevent tooth decay?**

Fluoride can prevent tooth decay in two ways:

- When fluoride in drinking water is consumed it becomes part of the tooth's structure as it develops. Fluoride strengthens all layers of the tooth, creating stronger teeth for life.
- When teeth come in contact with fluoride in drinking water, the tooth enamel is strengthened on the surface. This type of fluoride protection is also available through dental products such as fluoride toothpaste and mouth rinse as well as fluoride treatments, such as fluoride varnish.

Evidence shows that receiving different types of fluoride is safe and offers the greatest benefits for oral health.

### **What is water fluoridation?**

Almost all water contains some naturally occurring level of fluoride. Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting that amount of fluoride in our drinking water to a level recommended for preventing cavities.

### **What are the benefits of water fluoridation?**

Studies continue to show the importance of water fluoridation in preventing and reducing tooth decay. This is true even with improvements in access to dental care, personal dental practices and increased availability of fluoride through other sources, such as fluoride toothpaste.

While water fluoridation benefits everyone in a community, it is especially important for children and groups that experience higher rates of tooth decay and poorer oral health.

**Why does Nova Scotia Health Public Health support water fluoridation?**

Water fluoridation is one of the most effective public health measures that can be taken to reduce tooth decay because it reaches everyone in a community regardless of their age, income or access to dental care.

Nova Scotia Health (NSH) Public Health recommends community water fluoridation alongside more than 90 other provincial, national, and international professional organizations, associations and governments because it is supported by evidence to be an important, safe, and effective measure to improve the oral health of Nova Scotians.

**Do all communities in Nova Scotia have access to water fluoridation?**

In 2022, about 50.4% of people in Nova Scotia had access to water with the recommended level of fluoride through a community water system. While all water contains some fluoride naturally, most water supplies in Nova Scotia do not have enough to help prevent tooth decay. Food is also not a major source of fluoride in Canada.

**What amount of fluoride in water is considered optimal for oral health?**

Health Canada recommends that communities fluoridate water to 0.7 milligrams per litre (mg/L) to achieve the benefits of cavity prevention. This level considers the other ways that people commonly receive fluoride, such as through fluoride toothpaste and treatments received at the dentist.

The level set for water fluoridation in Canada of 0.7mg/L is less than half the maximum level of 1.5mg/L that has been established by Health Canada and the World Health Organization.

**What about recent reports on water fluoridation and IQ in children?**

Recent reports have been published that look at fluoride levels above the maximum 1.5 mg/L and developmental outcomes in children, including IQ scores.

The evidence in the reports is not conclusive and does not show high fluoride causes lower IQs in children. In these studies, high fluoride levels are defined as greater than 1.5 mg/L, which is about double the standard for drinking water in Canada and Nova Scotia of 0.7 mg/L.

NSH Public Health continues to monitor ongoing scientific research on fluoride, community water fluoridation and health.

**What is dental fluorosis?**

Repeat exposure to high levels of fluoride (above the maximum level of 1.5 mg/L) has been shown to increase risk for dental fluorosis. Dental fluorosis is a cosmetic issue that affects the tooth enamel, and makes teeth appear to have white flecks or brown pitting.

Dental fluorosis is very uncommon in Canada and not a concern for most children. Some children have mild cases of fluorosis that often go unnoticed and present no long-term health problems.

**How do we know that the fluoride in drinking water in Nova Scotia municipalities remains below 1.5 mg/L?**

Municipalities that adjust the fluoride in drinking water are required to test their water supply daily to make sure recommended levels are maintained at 0.7 mg/L, or half the maximum level set by Health Canada of 1.5 mg/L.

**Why does NSH Public Health offer a school-based fluoride varnish program?**

High levels of early childhood cavities and limited access to dental care are major concerns in our province.

School-based fluoride programs are offered in many areas across Canada because they are a safe and effective way to deliver additional topical fluoride to children to help prevent tooth decay. NSH Public Health offers a Fluoride Varnish Program in pre-primary to grade 6 students in select communities that would benefit most from an additional layer of protection.

School-based fluoride programs compliment other ways children receive fluoride, such as through their dental provider and water fluoridation. Children benefit from access to multiple sources and applications of fluoride and can safely receive up to six applications of fluoride varnish a year.

# Community Water Fluoridation

**Community water fluoridation is recommended as an important, safe and effective measure to improve the oral health of Nova Scotians.**

## The Facts

- **Oral health** is essential to overall health and well-being at every age and stage of life. A healthy mouth allows a person to eat, speak, learn and socialize without discomfort or embarrassment.
- **Tooth decay** is the most common chronic condition of childhood. It can lead to unnecessary pain or suffering, infection, tooth loss, or costly restorative treatment. In school-aged children, poor oral health outcomes are associated with lower school attendance and performance.
- **Populations** that experience the most tooth decay are also those who have the greatest difficulty accessing oral health care.
- **Fluoride** is a mineral that strengthens teeth, making them more resistant to decay. It is naturally occurring in water, soil, plants and food, and is added to various dental products.
- **Community water fluoridation** is the process of adjusting the amount of naturally occurring fluoride in drinking water supplies to achieve a level that is optimal for oral health.
- **Communities** with access to fluoridated water report lower rates of tooth decay.
- **NSH Public Health** recommends water fluoridation based on a collection of credible science, expert knowledge, and community experience.

## How It Works

Community water fluoridation delivers two kinds of fluoride protection against tooth decay:

- 1) **Topical:** when the outside of teeth come in direct contact with the fluoride in drinking water.
- 2) **Systemic:** when fluoridated water is consumed, fluoride is made available inside the body to become part of the tooth's structure while it is still developing.

Community water fluoridation is endorsed by more than 90 provincial, national and international professional organizations, associations and governments.

## NSH Public Health Supports Community Water Fluoridation

It is universal  
and accessible.

1

Community water fluoridation reaches everyone in a community regardless of their age, income or access to dental care services or supplies.

It improves  
oral health for  
everyone.

2

Community water fluoridation improves oral health outcomes across populations and age groups. It is especially beneficial for those that experience greater rates of tooth decay.

It is a  
preventative  
approach.

3

Community water fluoridation delivers fluoride protection to the entire community, helping to prevent tooth decay before treatment is required. Investing in prevention is beneficial for individuals, communities, and the health care system.

It is regulated  
and monitored.

4

Drinking water supplies are regularly tested to ensure that optimal fluoride levels are always maintained. This level is set by Health Canada and accounts for exposure to fluoride from other common sources.

It contributes to  
healthy, vibrant  
communities.

5

Improving oral health contributes to the overall health of a community. Community water fluoridation is part of creating places where people live, learn, work and play that support and promote health - now and into the future.

## Additional Resources

Nova Scotia Health - [Oral Health | Nova Scotia Health \(nshealth.ca\)](https://www.nshealth.ca/oral-health)

Health Canada – [Community Water Fluoridation](https://www.healthcanada.ca/community-water-fluoridation)

Public Health Agency of Canada – [Position Statement on Community Water Fluoridation](https://www.canada.ca/public-health/position-statement-community-water-fluoridation)

Nova Scotia Dental Association – [Understanding Fluoride](https://www.nsda.ca/understanding-fluoride)

**Please contact your local Public Health office  
for more information.**

[www.nshealth.ca/public-health](https://www.nshealth.ca/public-health)



May 30, 2025

West Hants Regional Council Members  
West Hants Regional Municipality  
76 Morison Dr., P.O. Box 3000  
Windsor, NS B0N 2T0

Dear West Hants Regional Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the importance of community water fluoridation (CWF) as a public health measure.

The **Nova Scotia Regulator of Dental Hygiene, Dental Technology, and Denturism (NSRDHDTD)** is the regulatory body responsible for licensing and regulating dental hygienists, dental technologists, and denturists across the province. All three professions are regulated, licenced health professionals who are united in their committed to improving oral health for all Nova Scotians. While each of these three oral health professions has a distinct scope of practice and focus, dental hygienists have a primary focus on oral disease prevention.

As a regulator, the NSRDHDTD is committed to advancing safe, effective, and evidence-based, public health measures that improve oral health outcomes. With this in mind, we strongly support **community water fluoridation programs** throughout Nova Scotia. We encourage the **West Hants Regional Municipality** council to contemplate implementation and maintenance of community water fluoridation in your community.

Oral health is important to overall health and well-being at every age and stage of life. A healthy mouth allows a person to eat, speak, learn and socialize. It can also impact a person's self-esteem, confidence, and quality of life. Oral health professionals see firsthand the impact of tooth decay on children and adults, including seniors, in their communities.

Tooth decay continues to be the most common childhood preventable chronic disease in Canada, and it remains a significant oral health problem worldwide for both children and adults. In Canada, approximately 96% of adults have a history of dental caries, and nearly 57% of children aged 6 to 11 have experienced dental caries in their primary teeth.<sup>1</sup> This can impact children's growth and development, behaviour, and ability to learn, socialize and play.

Extensive scientific research and decades of practical application have demonstrated that community water fluoridation is a safe, effective, and equitable method to reduce the prevalence of dental caries. Numerous studies show that fluoridation reduces dental decay by approximately 25% in children and adults, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, or access to dental care.<sup>2</sup>

From a public health perspective, water fluoridation is cost-effective, saving communities money by reducing the need for restorative dental care. Furthermore, community water fluoridation promotes oral health equity by providing widespread protection against tooth decay, especially in underserved populations who may lack access to regular oral health care.<sup>3</sup>

As a regulatory body, we uphold the responsibility to advocate for scientifically validated practices that protect and improve public health. In this capacity, we encourage community leaders, policymakers, and other interested parties, to prioritize water fluoridation efforts to safeguard the oral health of current and future generations.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you to further educate the public about the benefits of water fluoridation and to address any concerns based on misinformation or misconceptions. Please feel free to contact us at [registrar@oralhealthns.ca](mailto:registrar@oralhealthns.ca)

Thank you for your dedication to fostering healthier Nova Scotian communities. We stand ready to support and advocate for initiatives that enhance public oral health through proven preventive measures such as community water fluoridation.

Sincerely,



Stacy Bryan

NSRDHDTD Registrar

## Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS). (2007–2009). *Oral Health Statistics in Canada*. Statistics Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2018). *Community Water Fluoridation: Fluoridation Basics*. <https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/index.html>; and Griffin, S. O., Regnier, E., Griffin, P. M., & Huntley, V. (2007). *Effectiveness of fluoride in preventing caries in adults*. *Journal of Dental Research*, 86(5), 410-415. <https://doi.org/10.1177/154405910708600504>

<sup>3</sup> National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR). (2020). *Oral Health Disparities in the United States: The Need for Action*. <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/>; and McLaren, L., & Singhal, S. (2016). *Does cessation of community water fluoridation lead to an increase in tooth decay? A systematic review*. *BMC Oral Health*, 16, 43. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12903-016-0203-z>



Mayor Abraham Zebian  
Members of the West Hants Council  
West Hants Regional Municipality  
76 Morison Dr., P.O. Box 3000  
Windsor, NS  
B0N 2T0

June 3, 2025

**Re: Support for Community Water Fluoridation**

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

As both president of the Nova Scotia Dental Association and a practicing dentist, I regularly see the impacts of early childhood dental decay. Toothache pain is one of the most common reasons children miss school, and the number #1 reason for day surgery among preschoolers. While research on early childhood dental decay is limited in Nova Scotia, a Dalhousie study in 2006/7 found that well over half of children aged 7 – 8 had cavities. In Calgary, less than a decade after the cessation of fluoride being added to the city's water there was a 700% increase in the need for IV antibiotics in children. This represented potentially life-threatening infections associated with advancing pediatric dental disease.

For over 75 years, fluoride water has been proven again and again as a powerful defense against tooth decay, reducing it by 25% - 30% in both children and adults. The Centre for Disease Control & Prevention has named community water fluoridation as one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Nova Scotia Dental Association, representing its 600+ member dentists, is firmly behind community water fluoridation. We urge Nova Scotia's municipalities to consider adding fluoride at recommended levels where water is currently not fluoridated, and for the municipalities with existing fluoride programs, to continue fluoridation.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Claire Karst". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Claire Karst, DDS  
President  
Nova Scotia Dental Association

**From the Dentists practicing in the Municipality of West Hants:**

**Subject: Support for Community Water Fluoridation in West Hants**

Dear Council Members of the West Hants Regional Municipality:

We are writing to express our strong support for the addition of fluoride to our local water supply. As practicing dentists in our community, we witness firsthand the impact of oral health on overall well-being. Community water fluoridation is a safe and effective public health measure, supported by extensive scientific research, and endorsed by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

Fluoride plays a crucial role in preventing tooth decay, reducing dental costs, and promoting lifelong oral health. Studies have consistently shown that fluoridated water significantly lowers the incidence of cavities in children and adults alike. Moreover, its benefits extend across all socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring equitable access to oral health protection for every resident.

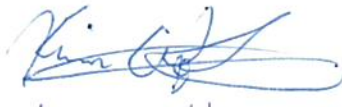
The decision to re-introduce fluoride into our water supply falls under municipal authority. Given its proven safety and effectiveness, we urge the council to consider this measure as dental caries is the number one chronic childhood disease. The long-term benefits of improved dental health and reduced healthcare costs far outweigh any initial concerns. Numerous municipalities across the country have already implemented this policy with great success, improving the health of their residents of all ages but especially children.

We sincerely hope the council will consider the overwhelming scientific evidence and expert recommendations in favor of fluoridation. We are happy to provide further information or discuss this matter in greater detail at your convenience.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

Dr Kevin Walsh



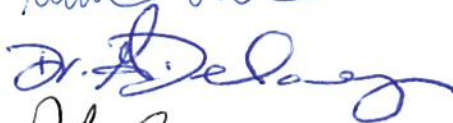
Dr. Shannon Fitzpatrick



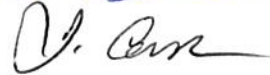
Dr. Miranda Walsh



Dr. Gillian Delaney



Dr. Joanne Carson



Dr. Charanpal Ahluwalia

Dr. Krista Underhill



Dr. Ashfaq Jiwani

