



CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Press Release

Embargoed until 4 p.m., Thursday, February 21, 2002

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Community Water Fluoridation Now Reaches Nearly Two-thirds of U.S. Population

Nearly two-thirds of U.S. residents who receive water from public water systems now receive fluoridated water, according to an article released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The article, "Populations Receiving Optimally Fluoridated Public Drinking Water — United States, 2000," provides the most recent information on the status of water fluoridation by state. Between 1992 and 2000, the percent of the U.S. population receiving fluoridated water increased from 62.1 percent to 65.8 percent, bringing the total U.S. population receiving fluoridated water to approximately 162 million.

Fluoride, a naturally occurring element in the environment, is known to be effective in preventing tooth decay in children and adults. Over the past several decades, fluoridation has played an important role in the dramatic reduction of tooth decay and has been identified by CDC as one of the 10 greatest public health achievements in the 20th Century. However, tooth decay remains the most prevalent chronic infectious disease of childhood; 80 percent of all children have had dental decay by the time they are 18 years of age. Recent estimates of effectiveness indicate that water fluoridation reduces tooth decay among children by 18 percent to 40 percent. The percentage of 17-year-olds who never had tooth decay increased from 6 percent in the early 1970s to 22 percent in the early 1990s.

The importance of fluoridation for reducing tooth decay was highlighted in the first Surgeon General's report on oral health (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/oralhealth/>) issued in May 2000, and further reinforced in a December 2001 statement by U.S. Surgeon

General David Satcher (<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/oh/fl-surgeon2001.html>) in which he said: "Water fluoridation has helped improve the quality of life in the United States through reduced pain and suffering related to tooth decay, reduced time lost from school and work, and less money spent to restore, remove, or replace decayed teeth."

The Healthy People 2010 national health initiative set an objective for 75 percent of the U.S. population on public water systems to receive fluoridated water. Between 1992 and 2001, five additional states (Delaware, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska and Virginia) achieved the Healthy People objective, and Oklahoma was close (74.6 percent) to achieving this goal. Twenty-six states and the District of Columbia have now met this objective. State-specific percentages range from 2 percent to 100 percent of persons on public water systems that receive optimally fluoridated water.

"Water fluoridation is the most equitable and cost-effective means we have of delivering fluoride to all members of most communities," said Dr. William R. Maas, director of CDC's Oral Health Program. "While several states, such as California, New Hampshire and Nevada have made substantial progress, there is considerable need as well as opportunity for additional improvement, particularly in the 24 states that have not yet met the objective of having at least 75 percent of their population on public water systems receiving fluoridated water."

The fluoridation update appears in today's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, which can be viewed or downloaded at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/. Other information on fluoridation and oral health is available on-line through the oral health web site: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/oh or by calling 770-488-5131 or 770-488-6054.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

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TABLE 1. Number of persons and percentage of the population receiving optimally fluoridated water through public water systems (PSW), by state, United States, 1992 and 2000

State	2000 Fluoridated Population	2000 Total PWS Population	2000 Percent Fluoridated	1992 Percent Fluoridated (9)	Percentage Point Change 1992-2000
Alabama+	3,967,059	4,447,100	89.2	82.6	+6.6
Alaska	270,099	489,371	55.2	61.2	-6.0
Arizona	2,700,354	4,869,065	55.5	49.9	+5.6
Arkansas*	1,455,767	2,431,477	59.9	58.7	+1.2
California	9,551,961	33,238,057	28.7	15.7	+13.0
Colorado*	2,852,386	3,708,061	76.9	81.7	-4.8
Connecticut	2,398,227	2,701,178	88.8	85.9	+2.9
Delaware	505,747	624,923	80.9	67.4	+13.5
District of Columbia	595,000	595,000	100.0	100.0	0.0
Florida	9,407,494	15,033,574	62.6	58.3	+4.3
Georgia	6,161,139	6,634,635	92.9	92.1	+0.8
Hawaii+	109,147	1,211,537	9.0	13.0	-4.0
Idaho	383,720	845,780	45.4	48.3	-2.9
Illinois	10,453,837	11,192,286	93.4	95.2	-1.8
Indiana	4,232,907	4,441,502	95.3	98.6	-3.3
Iowa	2,181,649	2,390,661	91.3	91.4	-0.1
Kansas	1,513,306	2,421,274	62.5	58.4	+4.1
Kentucky	3,235,053	3,367,812	96.1	100.0	-3.9
Louisiana+	2,375,702	4,468,976	53.2	55.7	-2.5
Maine	466,208	618,033	75.4	55.8	+19.6
Maryland*	4,124,953	4,547,908	90.7	85.8	+4.9
Massachusetts**	3,546,099	6,349,097	55.8	57.0	-1.2
Michigan	6,568,151	7,242,531	90.7	88.5	+2.2
Minnesota	3,714,465	3,780,942	98.2	93.4	+4.8
Mississippi	1,227,268	2,665,075	46.0	48.4	-2.4
Missouri+	4,502,722	5,595,211	80.5	71.4	+9.1
Montana	143,092	645,452	22.2	25.9	-3.7
Nebraska*	966,262	1,243,713	77.7	62.1	+15.6
Nevada*	1,078,479	1,637,105	65.9	2.1	+63.8
New Hampshire	347,007	807,438	43.0	24.0	+19.0
New Jersey	1,120,410	7,208,514	15.5	16.2	-0.7
New Mexico	1,187,404	1,548,084	76.7	66.2	+10.5
New York*	12,000,000	17,690,198	67.8	69.7	-1.9
North Carolina	4,862,220	5,837,936	83.3	78.5	+4.8
North Dakota	531,738	557,595	95.4	96.4	-1.0
Ohio	8,355,002	9,535,188	87.6	87.9	-0.3
Oklahoma*	2,164,330	2,900,000	74.6	58.0	+16.6
Oregon*	612,485	2,700,000	22.7	24.8	-2.1
Pennsylvania	5,825,328	10,750,095	54.2	50.9	+3.3
Rhode Island	842,797	989,786	85.1	100.0	-14.9
South Carolina	3,086,974	3,383,434	91.2	90.0	+1.2
South Dakota*	553,503	626,221	88.4	100.0	-11.6
Tennessee	4,749,493	5,025,998	94.5	92.0	+2.5
Texas	11,868,046	18,072,680	65.7	64.0	+1.7
Utah**	43,816	2,233,169	2.0	3.1	-1.1
Vermont	240,579	443,901	54.2	57.4	-3.2
Virginia	5,677,551	6,085,436	93.3	72.1	+21.2
Washington*	2,844,893	4,925,540	57.8	53.2	+4.6
West Virginia*	1,207,000	1,387,000	87.0	82.1	+4.9
Wisconsin	3,108,738	3,481,285	89.3	93.0	-3.7
Wyoming+	149,774	493,782	30.3	35.7	-5.4
Total	162,067,341	246,120,616	65.8%	62.1	+3.7

* Complete data were not available from WFRS; additional information was obtained from states.
+ Reported PWS population exceeded total state population; PWS population was set to US Census 2000 state population.