

## 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 Web site 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) 415-5200

##### North Central District Health

215 10th Street  
Lewiston, ID 83501  
(208) 799-0353

##### Central District Health

707 North Armstrong Place  
Boise, ID 83704  
(208) 327-7499

##### Southwest District Health

920 Main Street  
Caldwell, ID 83605  
(208) 455-5403

##### South Central District Health

1020 Washington Street N.  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
(208) 734-5900 ext. 217

##### Southeastern District Health

1901 Alvin Ricken Drive  
Pocatello, ID 83201  
(208) 233-9080 ext. 320

##### Eastern Idaho Public Health District

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

### Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Regional Offices

#### Boise Regional Office

1445 North Orchard  
Boise, ID 83706  
(208) 373-0550

#### Twin Falls Regional Office

1363 Fillmore Street  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
(208) 736-2190

#### Coeur d'Alene Regional Office

2110 Ironwood Parkway  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
(208) 769-1422

#### Pocatello Regional Office

444 Hospital Way #300  
Pocatello, ID 83201  
(208) 236-6160

#### Lewiston Regional Office

1118 F. Street  
Lewiston, ID 83501  
(208) 799-4370

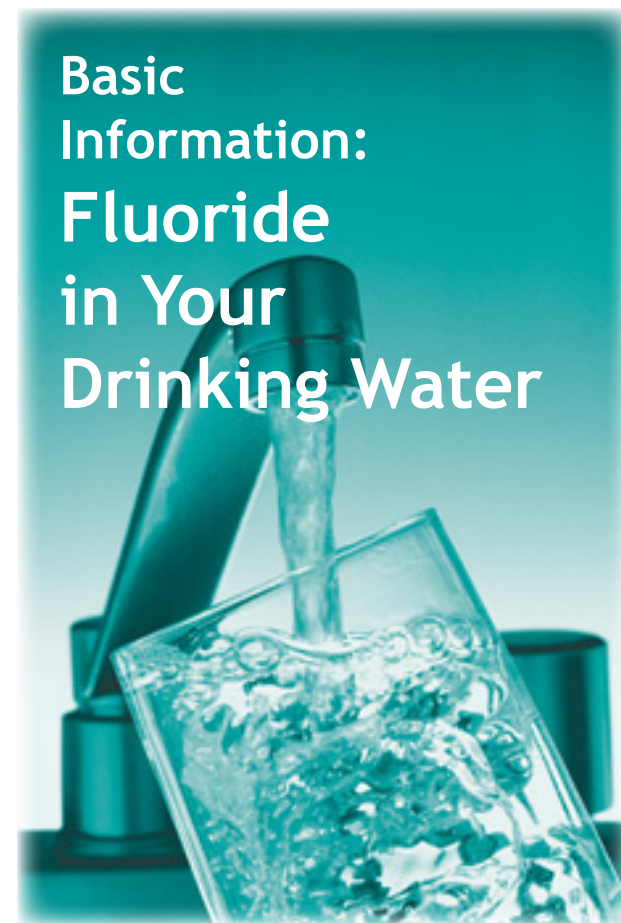
#### Idaho Falls Regional Office

900 Skyline, Suite B  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
(208) 528-2650



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## Drinking Water in Idaho



# Basic Information: Fluoride in Your Drinking Water



Idaho Department of  
Environmental Quality  
[www.deq.idaho.gov](http://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 *Frequently Asked Questions About Fluoride* page on DEQ's Web site (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 Web page 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 or to learn more about drinking water and well water, visit DEQ's Web site at [www.deq.idaho.gov/water/prog\\_issues.cfm#drink](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water/prog_issues.cfm#drink).

## 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

### **Frequently Asked Questions About Fluoride**

DEQ Web site: [www.deq.idaho.gov/water/prog\\_issues/drinking\\_water/fluoride.cfm](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water/prog_issues/drinking_water/fluoride.cfm)

### **Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Oral Health Program**

[www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/site/3494/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=3494](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/site/3494/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=3494)

### **List of Idaho Health Districts and their Web sites**

[www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/site/3382/default.aspx](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/site/3382/default.aspx)

### **Center for Disease Control**

[www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/waterfluoridation/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/waterfluoridation/index.htm)

### **American Dental Association Fluoride Information**

[www.ada.org/public/topics/fluoride/index.asp](http://www.ada.org/public/topics/fluoride/index.asp)

### **Oral Health Topics A-Z**

[www.ada.org/public/topics/bottled\\_water.asp](http://www.ada.org/public/topics/bottled_water.asp)