

How can we end Fluoridation?

**We can end fluoridation
through democratic means.**



**Our elected representatives in municipal
government have authority and responsibility
for municipal water fluoridation.**

Yet, municipal councils often defer to opinions and endorsements promoting municipal water fluoridation coming from public health, dental associations, and other groups. Such bodies are unelected, and typically remain inaccessible and unaccountable to local citizens, while remaining intimate with municipally elected councils. In essence, such bodies have become pro-fluoridation lobbyists.

**Fluoridation is the legal and financial
responsibility of each municipality that
owns and operates a drinking water system.**

Municipal councils have authority to end water fluoridation by passing a motion and then creating a by-law to decommission their fluoridation equipment. Local citizens can offer their council science-based, medical, ethical and individual-right-of-choice reasons to support an end to municipal water fluoridation. Also, only about 1% of all fluoridated water is actually consumed by people, while 99% gets used for other water needs. That's wasteful of local tax dollars.

If fluoridated drinking water is now to be supplied from a water distributor outside a previously un-fluoridated community, that community might be deprived of their democratic decision over fluoridation. Such an occurrence is discriminatory and must be challenged. Local council may still have the power to order that the community's purchased drinking water will remain free of hydrofluorosilicic acid – the chemical compound most often used to fluoridate municipal drinking water.

Local citizens may consider calling for a fluoridation referendum or plebiscite. That is how the city of Waterloo, Ontario ended its ongoing fluoridation in 2010. Specific requirements may vary between provinces/territories and are upheld by the Acts governing fluoridation and municipal elections. Such a referendum or ballot question costs municipal dollars, ultimately local rate-payer dollars. Persuading a council to simply end fluoridation directly can be a less costly option for a community.

In order to end fluoridation, citizens need to connect with and educate their elected municipal representatives. Help them to become comfortable and secure in making their rightful democratic decision to end fluoridation, even when it conflicts with the policy preference of public health. That is how the city of Calgary, Alberta ended its ongoing fluoridation in 2011.

Five First Steps

1. Partner with **Canadians Opposed to Fluoridation ~ Canadiens Opposés à la Fluoration**. Learn why fluoridation is a harmful practice, about the chemicals that are actually being used to fluoridate, and about the strongest arguments for ending fluoridation.
2. Learn who has the power in your community and what the rules are to follow. Familiarize yourself with your provincial/territorial drinking water and fluoridation Acts. Understand your local municipal referendum process.
3. Form a local community group, or join an existing local group, and develop your position statement calling for an end to fluoridation.
4. Write or email your councillors and mayor, copying in any regional or district council members when applicable. Communicate with others on relevant committees. Make sure you indicate that you live locally. Councillors need to know there is local pressure within their own community or ward. Phone and ask to meet briefly to discuss the fluoridation issue, seeking first to understand what others understand, before making any recommendations or suggestions. Build bridges and alliances. Let your councillors know if you or your children have suffered from dental fluorosis due to swallowing fluoride from fluoridated water.
5. Make your letters short, polite and clear. Not more than one page, not more than three points. Use a *two-tell, one-ask* format. Stick to the issue of ending fluoridation and why. Councillors receive many letters, and may prefer to read the short ones.

Those who exert the most pressure on elected municipal council to continue fluoridating municipal drinking water are typically public health staff whose job it is to promote public health policy. They are typically not experts in water fluoridation science, chemicals, dosage, health effects, water treatment concerns, or environmental concerns. Public health holds no authority to order your municipality to fluoridate local drinking water as a public health measure.

Public health claims fluoridation is an urgent need, and typically cites fluoridation's claimed percentage of cavity reduction – often neglecting to further explain that this percentage reduction amounts to less than one cavity per person across the population, and sometimes no cavity reduction at all.

Public health is typically not challenged by council members because public health comes armed with a federal government recommendation to fluoridate. Still, public health cannot force any community to fluoridate their municipal water supply.

As democratic minded citizens, we can help our elected officials come to understand where the science falls short, as well as the ethical and legal implications surrounding water fluoridation. It is our right and our obligation to do as much.

We want to address this important issue, with your help.



[e-mail action@cof-cof.ca](mailto:e-mail_action@cof-cof.ca)

<http://cof-cof.ca>

<https://www.facebook.com/CanadiansOpposedtoFluoridation>

<http://twitter.com/#!/EndFluoridation>

<http://www.youtube.com/COFCOFBroadcast>

COF-COF.ca Feb-2014