



Royal College of
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**PRESENTATION IN SUPPORT
OF FLUORIDATION
OF COMMUNITY DRINKING WATER**

**DR. NATALIE ARCHER
VICE PRESIDENT
ROYAL COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGEONS OF ONTARIO**

**CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE
CITY OF LONDON**

JANUARY 25, 2012

Good evening. I would like to thank the Civic Works Committee for the opportunity to speak on the issue of water fluoridation.

My name is Dr. Natalie Archer. I am the mother of two small children and I have been practising family dentistry for over ten years in Ontario.

I have a general dental practice in downtown Toronto and I also set up a new geriatric and special needs dental clinic located within a chronic care hospital to improve access to care for the residents and our community.

Tonight I speak to you as the Vice-President of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario and hereafter I will refer to it as the RCDSO which is a provincial health-care regulatory body.

We are mandated by provincial law to protect the public's right to quality oral health care in Ontario and to work in the interests of public protection and safety.

We take this mandate very seriously. That is why in 2003 our governing board passed a policy in support of water fluoridation.

Our governing board composed both of dentists and of members of the public appointed by government, is convinced that fluoridation of community water systems, at the appropriate levels, is a safe and effective public health measure.

Tooth decay is really a health care issue. Did you know that tooth decay is an infectious disease? And did you know that it is the #1 chronic disease in children and adolescents in Canada? It is five times more common than asthma.

Untreated tooth decay can lead to infection and pain and abscesses. It can affect school performance, one's general health status, and even influence a person's sense of self-worth.

Most people know about the benefits that water fluoridation brings to children – less tooth decay, less pain, fewer fillings and fewer emergency visits to the dentist.

However, not many people realize that those same benefits also apply to adults, including our elderly population.

These benefits are important as our older demographic typically become more susceptible and vulnerable to tooth decay due to their diminished salivary flow, depriving teeth of the many protective factors in saliva.

In fact, anyone who still has their own teeth will benefit from drinking fluoridated water.

Over many years, balanced and credible studies and independent reviews of relevant medical and scientific literature have consistently failed to find evidence that water fluoridation has any effect on the health of the body – other than reducing tooth decay.

Fluoride is naturally present at varying concentrations in all water supplies. Fluoridation is just used to top up the natural fluoride in order to increase the dental benefits.

Let me assure you, there are many safeguards in place to protect the public. The province has standards for the amount of fluoride permitted in drinking water. This ensures that citizens benefit from tooth decay prevention, while avoiding any possible unwanted health effects, however remote.

Water fluoridation has an admirable track record of success. It has been used throughout the world for at least for 60 years. Around 400 million people in over 53 countries drink fluoridated water. That includes over 70% of the population of the United States.

Fluoridation is supported at the highest international levels of health and scientific policy-making. Let's look at who supports water fluoridation: organizations like the World Health Organization, Health Canada, the Chief Medical Officer for the province of Ontario, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as the Ontario Medical Association.

RCDSO is also pleased to bring the endorsements of fluoridation from the Deans of the Faculty of Dentistry at both the University of Toronto and from the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario.

These two academic institutions are leaders in dental education and research in Canada.

Their letters of support are attached to my presentation. They add even more weight to the credible evidence in support of the safety and effectiveness of water fluoridation.

Let me close by saying that on behalf of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario, I want to thank you for your serious consideration of this issue.

We sincerely urge you to continue to ensure that the City of London residents will continue to have the benefit of this safe, effective and economical way to help prevent tooth decay in children, adults and seniors.

Thank you for your attention.



Faculty of Dentistry
University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

David Mock, DDS, PhD, FRCD(C)
Professor & Dean
Arthur Zwingenberger Decanal Chair

July 2, 2009

President,
Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing in support of the RCDSO's position on water fluoridation. Our position has been clearly stated in a submission prepared in conjunction with the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, the Ontario Dental Association and the RCDSO some time ago.

Dental caries is the most prevalent infectious disease and the commonest cause of tooth loss in humans. Besides the obvious pain and suffering it causes, poor oral health and resultant infections have more recently been associated with many other diseases and therefore poor general health. The adverse economic, sociological and psychological effects of dental disease are not inconsequential. Fortunately, a relatively simple, effective and inexpensive means to reduce the occurrence of this condition is available: fluoridation. While fluoride can be delivered in a variety of ways - through toothpaste or direct application by dental professionals - the most efficient means of achieving impact is through fluoridation of public water supplies. In 1999 the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified fluoridation of water as one of the ten greatest achievements of public health in the previous century. Unfortunately, in Ontario, we are witnessing a concerted effort to reverse fluoridation of public water. The opponents of fluoridation have selectively presented research to make their case but the fact is there are few health interventions for which the benefits and risk are so clear.

Claims that therapeutic concentrations cause diseases such as cancer do not stand up to scientific scrutiny. Thorough reviews have been undertaken by reputable and trustworthy scientific and health related organizations including Health Canada, the CDC, the Office of the Surgeon General of the United States, and the World Health Organization. The result has been unanimous support for the safety and efficacy of water fluoridation in the control of dental caries. Furthermore, major dental and medical associations and public health agencies, both nationally and internationally support its use. The most significant beneficiaries are the most vulnerable, children from lower income families, who can least afford to obtain either preventive dental services, or the even most expensive treatments if caries are not prevented.

It is illogical to deprive our population, particularly our children, of the benefit of water fluoridation based on unsupported speculation while disregarding sound scientific evidence and the advice of the leading national and international health authorities. Like all therapeutic treatments, research should and will continue in order to maximize the safety and efficacy of fluorides so that future generations will reap even more benefit. Millions of children, now adults, have benefitted to date and, if reason prevails, millions more will.

Yours sincerely,

David Mock



July 3, 2009

President
Royal College of Dental Surgeons

Dear Sir or Madame,

I am writing in strong support of the RCDSO's position and to provide further a strong endorsement to the fluoridation in municipal drinking water.

Water fluoridation is known to be one of the greatest public health and disease-preventive measures world-wide. Evidence gathered by the Center for Disease Control, National Institute of Dental Research and Health Canada demonstrates that fluoride treated water continues to provide dental health benefits to all ages.

Epidemiological studies have concluded that a daily and frequent small amount of fluoride appears to dramatically reduce the incidence of dental caries in all populations. It has proven to be a safe and effective method of reducing dental decay and retaining tooth structure. More importantly, it suggests that the greatest population who benefits from water fluoridation is children from economically depressed communities.

Opposition of water fluoridation has existed ever since it was introduced in Michigan in the 1940s. Many opposed individuals view fluoridation as limiting their freedom of choice. The latter opposition who believe it is a health concern stems from misinterpretations of the scientific studies of fluoride.

It could conceivably be unethical to not add fluoride in the municipality water supply, because of its sustained record of significantly improving the oral health of local people of all ages, and helping to lower high levels of dental disease for our most vulnerable populations – low or no income families.

Sincerely,

Harinder S. Sandhu, DDS, PhD, Diploma in Perio
Director, Schulich Dentistry