



**Royal College of  
Dental Surgeons of Ontario**

*Ensuring Continued Trust*

6 Crescent Road  
Toronto, ON Canada M4W 1T1  
T: 416.961.6555 F: 416.961.5814  
Toll Free: 800.565.4591 [www.rcdso.org](http://www.rcdso.org)

**Presentation in Support of Fluoridation of Municipal Drinking Water**

*Dr. Peter Trainor*

*President*

*Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario*

**Toronto Board of Health  
Monday, April 4, 2011  
Committee Room One  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto**

Good afternoon. I want to thank the Board for the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

My name is Dr. Peter Trainor and I am here as the president of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

RCDSO 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.

We do not represent dentists but license and regulate the dental profession in Ontario.

I want to emphasize that point: RCDSO does not speak on behalf of the dental profession. We are the body mandated by provincial law to work in the interests of public protection and safety.

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

The College's Council, composed both of dentists and public members 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. The current disparities in oral health are sometimes referred to as a "silent epidemic." This burden of disease restricts activities in school, work and home, and often significantly diminishes the quality of life.

Tooth decay is an infectious disease and 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, pain and abscesses. It can affect school performance, even a child's sense of self-worth.

One of water fluoridation's biggest advantages is that it benefits all residents of a community - at home, work, school or play - throughout their lifetime. This is of key importance for families when income level or ability to receive routine dental care is a barrier to receiving its health benefits.

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 realise that those same benefits also apply to adults, including older people. In fact, anyone who still has any of their own teeth will benefit from drinking fluoridated water.

Research tells us that oral health and general health are strongly linked. Fluoridation improves a population's dental health, and as a consequence, its general health.

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

In fact, fluoride is not a new chemical in drinking water. It is naturally present at varying concentrations in all water supplies. We just use water fluoridation to top up the natural fluoride in order to increase the dental benefits.

There are safeguards in place to protect the public. The province has standards on 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.

Fluoridation has now been used throughout the world for at least 60 years. Around 400 million people in at least 53 countries drink fluoridated water -- including over two-thirds of the population of the United States. This means there is a wealth of experience and evidence about its positive health effects.

Fluoridation is supported at the highest international levels of health policy-making. The World Health Organisation continues to support water fluoridation. Health Canada supports the use of fluoridation, as does the Chief Medical Officer of Health in Ontario. The Ontario Medical Association also supports the addition of fluoride to drinking water.

RCDSO is pleased to bring the endorsements of fluoridation from the dean of the dental faculty at the University of Toronto and from the director of the dental department at the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario. These two dental schools are leaders in dental education in the country.

In closing, on behalf of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO), I want to thank you for your serious consideration of this issue.

We sincerely hope, with your usual thoughtfulness and vision, you will ensure that all Toronto residents will continue to have the benefit of this safe, effective and economical way to help prevent tooth decay in infants, 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

124 Edward Street Toronto Ontario M5G 1G6  
Phone (416) 979-4910 Ext. 4382  
Facsimile (416) 979-4937  
E-mail david.mock@dentistry.utoronto.ca



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

**Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry • The University of Western Ontario**  
Dentistry • Room 1003, Dental Sciences Building  
London, Ontario • N6A 5C1 • Canada  
Telephone: (519) 661-3330 • Fax: (519) 661-3875 • [www.schulich.uwo.ca/dentistry](http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/dentistry)