

MEDIA RELEASE

May 21, 2018



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THE EVIDENCE SHOWS WATER FLUORIDATION IS SAFE

The Australian Dental Association NSW is urging Oberon Council to implement community water fluoridation, saying there is overwhelming evidence that it safely prevents tooth decay.

“The people of Oberon are missing out on the health advantages that fluoridated communities have had for decades,” ADA NSW President Dr Neil Peppitt said.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in children, but is largely preventable. Children who suffer from tooth decay are more likely to have oral health problems in later life.

ADA NSW advises people to brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, floss daily, cut down on the amount of sugar they consume and visit the dentist regularly. As water fluoridation is proven to reduce tooth decay in children, adolescents and adults, ADA NSW recommends it be implemented and maintained in all communities where practical.

Dr Peppitt encouraged decision-makers to do everything in their power to improve the health of their communities.

“Water fluoridation is a safe, simple, cost-effective way to provide communities with the protective benefits of fluoride,” Dr Peppitt said.

“All the reliable evidence shows that water fluoridation in Australia is safe for our health and good for our teeth. Claims that fluoride is harmful at the levels found in our drinking water are simply scaremongering, and are not supported by valid research.

“While no reputable health organisation opposes community water fluoridation, more than 150 health, medical and scientific organisations worldwide support it, reflecting decades of solid evidence showing it is safe.

“It’s not just dentists who recommend fluoridation. Doctors, paediatricians and public health specialists do too – the very people working to keep our families healthy. Having strong, healthy teeth as a child sets you up for a lifetime of good oral health, which is vital for health overall.”

In an open letter to Councillors, the chief executive of the National Health and Medical Research Council, Professor Anne Kelso, wrote that NHMRC was “aware that some members of the community are raising concerns about health implications of water fluoridation”.

“NHMRC recently reviewed the scientific evidence that reported any health effects of water fluoridation and checked if they are relevant to Australia,” Professor Kelso wrote. “NHMRC found no reliable evidence that community water fluoridation at current Australian levels causes health problems.”

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, whose members include Australia's medical specialists in child and paediatric health, also backs fluoridation, saying: "The Royal Australasian College of Physicians supports the use of public water fluoridation to improve the oral health of children and young people. As a public health measure, water fluoridation has a proven impact on dental health for children and preventing tooth decay and the evidence-base also demonstrates it is safe."

Since 1994, there have been 18 major international reviews of the evidence relating to community water fluoridation and general health. They have found that fluoridation poses no known risks to health and offers significant dental health benefits.

ADA NSW encourages residents to write to Oberon Council in support of fluoridation at council@oberon.nsw.gov.au

About ADA NSW: We are the peak professional association for dentists and dental students in NSW and the ACT, with 4,500 members. ADA NSW has been promoting good oral health in the community since 1929. The mission of ADA NSW is to advance dentistry to improve the health of all Australians.

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