

Board of Health Approves Decrease in Drinking Water Fluoride Levels

At their meeting on September 9, 2015, the Sharon Board of Health voted to decrease the level of fluoride in local drinking water from 1.0 ppm to 0.7 ppm. This decrease follows new recommended levels of fluoride issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and supported by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Office of Oral Health. In contrast to a suggested range of fluoride from 0.7 to 1.2 ppm, HHS now recommends a single point level of 0.7 ppm. The increased availability of fluoride through sources other than water, including fluoride-based rinses, toothpaste, and dental treatments, supported the HHS and the Board's decision. The risk of increased occurrence of fluorosis due to exposure to high fluoride levels during childhood when teeth are formed also guided the Board of Health's vote on the issue.

Community water fluoridation--increasing fluoride concentrations in drinking water-- promotes dental health throughout a person's lifetime. The new recommended fluoride levels were released following an extensive review by HHS of existing data on fluoride intake, tooth decay, and dental fluorosis. National survey data show that tooth decay prevention can be maintained with fluoride at the 0.7 ppm level. The safety of fluoride in water has been demonstrated in numerous studies and reviews by multinational scientific and public health organizations according to the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information on fluoride in drinking water and the recent decision on recommended fluoride levels in drinking water, see <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/faqs/>, or contact the Sharon Health Department at (781) 784-1500 x 1140.