



By email

request-613953-d7dd04b4@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: 21/10/fb/737

18 November 2019

Dear P Maddison

Re: Information on fluoridation of water

Thank you for your email dated 21 October 2019. Your request for information has been handled under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

I have addressed your request in the order raised:

- 1) *So, you state fluoride is added to the water supply for the purpose of 'reducing tooth decay'. Is that not a form of medication. Should we not be given the personal choice whether we would like fluoride in our water to 'prevent tooth decay' or not. To force someone to take something against their will or without their knowledge is illegal.*

The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations allow for up to 1.5mg of fluoride to be present per litre of water, whether present naturally or as a result of water fluoridation. The latter is permitted, with a target concentration of 1mg/l under the Water Industry Act 1991, as amended. Regulations created under this Act cover the process for public consultation when establishing new schemes.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/56/contents>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/301/contents/made>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2018/647/made>

- 2) *I would like you to tell me what is a safe amount of fluoride to consume in volume by litre per day as I do not know of a RDA for water. But adding chemicals in water, such as fluoride is a worrying concern, what is the RDA for fluoride (and the other chemicals) that are put in the water.*

The World Health Organisation recommends a maximum concentration of fluoride in water of 1.5mg/litre. This level is intended to be protective of health over a lifetime of

exposure. This level is reflected in the water supply water quality regulations (link above).

The 1991 Act referred to above permits the use of two chemical compounds to increase the fluoride content of water within an area subject to a fluoridation arrangement. These compounds are Disodium Hexafluorosilicate (Na_2SiF_6) and Hexafluorosilicic Acid (H_2SiF_6).

3) *What are the side effects of too much of each chemical put in the water and has there been any studies into the excessive consumption of each chemical, if so, I would like to see these test results.*

There have been a number of authoritative reviews of water fluoridation undertaken since the first schemes in 1945. The common finding of the reviews looking at dental health is that levels of tooth decay are lower in fluoridated areas and, for reviews which looked at general health effects, that there is no credible scientific evidence that water fluoridation is harmful to health.

Examples of recent reviews are:

- National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia)(2017)
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/public-health/health-effects-water-fluoridation>
- Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (2019)
<https://www.cadth.ca/community-water-fluoridation-programs-health-technology-assessment>

The recently published Public Health England report, “Water Fluoridation Health Monitoring for England (PHE 2018)”, compared a range of dental and non-dental health indicators in fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas in this country. Its conclusions concurred with those of other authoritative reviews in finding no convincing evidence of harm to health due to fluoridation schemes.

This report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-fluoridation-health-monitoring-report-for-england-2018>

4) I would also like you to tell me what type of fluoride is being put in the water supply.

Please see answer to Q2.

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing foi@phe.gov.uk.

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner’s Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE

complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by writing to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

FOI Team