

Smilematters

PATIENT FACT SHEET

The Bottled Water Craze

Today, more and more health-conscious people sip bottled water. Bottled water contains no caffeine, no calories and no sugar. Plus, bottled water comes in convenient bottles, easy to tote from home to wherever the busy family goes.

Bottled water is quickly becoming one of the nation's most popular beverages. Americans consumed more than 5 billion gallons of bottled water in 2001. That's about the same amount of water that falls from the American Falls at Niagara Falls in two hours.

The human body depends on water to keep organs and systems functioning properly. Water that contains an adequate amount of fluoride, a naturally occurring mineral, helps prevent tooth decay and builds strong teeth. In areas where there is not enough natural occurring fluoride in the water for optimal oral health, many communities add a minute amount of fluoride to the water supply to make certain that residents receive the benefits of fluoride.

If bottled water is your main source of drinking water, you may be missing the decay-preventive benefits of fluoride. While the fluoride content of bottled water varies greatly, the majority of bottled waters contain very little, if any, fluoride. Many popular brands of bottled water undergo reverse osmosis or distillation, treatments which remove all of the fluoride from the water.

People who drink mostly bottled water, especially those who have children, need to be sure they receive the proper amount of fluoride. How can you be sure you are getting the right amount of fluoride in bottled water? Start by checking the label for fluoride

Quick Facts

- Talk to me about your child's risk of developing tooth decay and the different liquids, including water, which your child drinks.
- Fluoride occurs naturally in water and many different foods.
- Toothpaste, mouth rinses, and gels contain fluoride.
- Fluoride is most effective when combined with a healthy diet and good oral hygiene.

content. Unless fluoride has been added to the water, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not require bottled water companies to indicate fluoride content on the label. Contact the company and ask what level of fluoride the water contains.

Remember that amounts of fluoride are the same whether they are reported in parts per million or milligrams per liter. The optimal amount to help prevent tooth decay should be 0.7 to 1.2 ppm of fluoride. One part per million (ppm) is equal to 1 milligram per liter.