

How much

Fluoride

is in your

Drinking Water?



Too Little = Tooth Decay

Too Much = Tooth Discoloration

Just the Right Amount of Fluoride = Healthy Smile

The right amount of fluoride (1 milligram/liter) in your drinking water is the No. 1 way to prevent tooth decay. Too much fluoride when the enamel is forming can cause the teeth to vary in appearance from having mild whitish spots to more severe brown stains and pitting. Because permanent teeth are developing from **birth until age 9**, it is important to control the amount of fluoride swallowed by young children. The permanent upper front teeth are being formed from 15 months to 30 months of age and are sensitive to high levels of fluoride. For children over age 9 and adults, it is safe to drink water with fluoride levels below 4 mg/L.

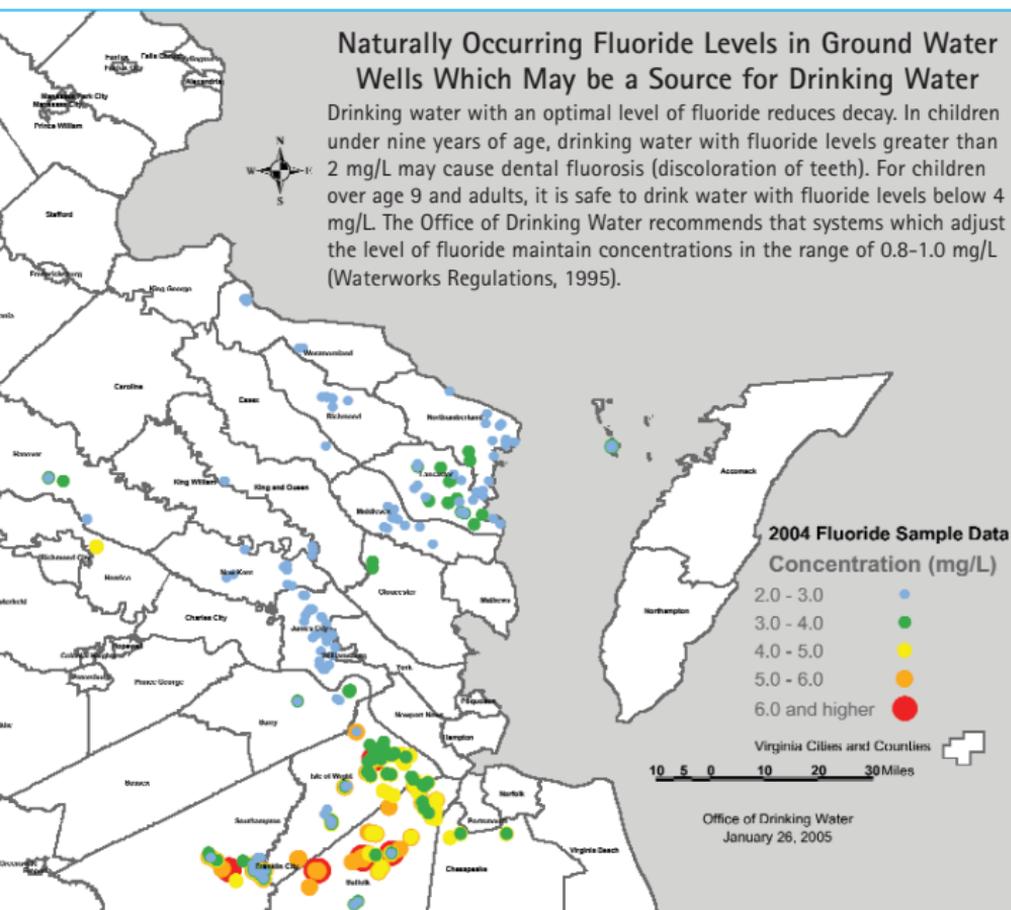


To protect

Your Child's Smile

from birth until age 9 you should...

- > **Know your drinking water's fluoride level:**
 - If you pay a water bill, your water company can give you the fluoride level.
 - **Test private well water** with a kit from your pediatrician, dentist, or local health department.
- > Drink bottled water with low fluoride if your tap water contains more than 2 milligrams/liter of fluoride.
- > Use ready-to-feed formulas or mix powdered and concentrated formulas using water without fluoride in it (check the label on bottled water).
- > Restrict and supervise the use of fluoride toothpaste:
 - Do not let children swallow the toothpaste.
 - Use only a pea size amount of toothpaste.
 - For children 2 years old and under consult a dentist or other health care provider before using toothpaste with fluoride.
- > Consider, when preparing foods and drinks, that the amount of fluoride in the water adds to the naturally occurring fluoride levels of the foods and drinks.



Remember, water does not follow geographic lines and can be affected by the depth of the wells and weather conditions such as heavy rains or drought. Fluoride levels can differ from well to well and should be tested. Talk to your pediatrician, dentist or local health department about your drinking water's fluoride.

You can also find more information at:

www.vahealth.org/teeth • www.ada.org • www.bottledwaterweb.com