

Fluoride addition to Lawrence's water – The Lawrence Utilities Department has added fluoride to the water treatment process for approximately 60 years. At the December 21, 1951 City Commission meeting, commissioners voted and approved the addition of fluoride to the city water supply. At the February 19, 1952 City Commission meeting, Utilities staff presented the cost of fluoridation equipment and its purchase was approved. In 1979, some residents voiced concerns over fluoridation. However, the commissioners voted to continue adding fluoride to the water, based on the testimony of local medical and dental providers.

The Lawrence Utilities Department currently adds fluoride within the range of 0.50 to 0.70 mg/L based on the recommendation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the optimal fluoride level in drinking water to prevent tooth decay. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency allows up to a maximum of 4 mg/L in drinking water, based on the level below which there is no known or expected risk to human health.

Fluoride has been proven to promote healthy teeth. The benefit of preventing tooth decay to children and adults include fewer cavities and less severe cavities, less need for fillings and tooth extractions, less pain and suffering associated with tooth decay, and overall general health benefits linked to oral health.

The addition of fluoride to drinking water began in this country in 1945. The American Water Works Association, the American Dental Association, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as countless other health, nutrition, and dental organizations, have expressed their recommendation and support for water fluoridation. The American Dental Association web site states, "Community water fluoridation is the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has proclaimed community water fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century." Currently 42 of the 50 largest cities in the U.S. use fluoridation and approximately 72% of the U.S. population served by public water systems receive the benefit of fluoridated water.