



# ORANGE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

*A public, non-profit agency providing water, sewer and reclaimed water services to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.*

## **Fluoridation of Drinking Water to Help Prevent Tooth Decay**

**June 12, 2017**

The [US Centers for Disease Control](#), [American Dental Association](#), [NC Division of Public Health](#), [Orange County Board of Health](#) and other organizations recommend that water utilities add fluoride to drinking water.

Of the 50 largest cities in the US, 44 (88%) provide fluoridated water including three cities which provide naturally fluoridated water. If the latter three cities are excluded, 41 (87%) of 47 provide fluoridated water.

74% of the US population served by a community water system received fluoridated water in 2014.

Fluoride naturally present in groundwater ranges up to more than 12 parts per million. Fluoride in rivers and other surface water may range up to 1.4 parts per million.

OWASA fluoridates water to the level of 0.7 of one part per million, which is consistent with guidance by the US Public Health Service. The federal limit on fluoride is 4 parts per million.

OWASA uses fluoride which meets the purity standards of the [National Sanitation Foundation](#) and the American Water Works Association for use in drinking water. Testing by an independent laboratory in 2012 found no presence of arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury and other metals at levels detectable by the laboratory equipment

OWASA's annual cost of buying fluoride for water treatment is about \$25,000.

Fluoridation in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community began in 1964. In the US, fluoridation began in 1945.

In e-mails and letters to OWASA from February 2, 2017 to May 4, 2017, 29 individuals and groups supported fluoridation and 28 opposed it.

### **For more information**

- Orange County Health Department: Donna King, Division Director, Health Promotion and Educational Services, [dking@co.orange.nc.us](mailto:dking@co.orange.nc.us) or 919-245-2449
- OWASA: Katie Harrold, Laboratory Supervisor at the Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant, [kharrold@owasa.org](mailto:kharrold@owasa.org) or 919-537-4227
- [OWASA's fluoridation webpage](#) includes links to information from international, national, State and local organizations and a question-and-answer page.