Facts About San Diego City & County Water Fluoridation - * 2011

What is fluoridation?

- The city of San Diego is joining with much of the County in a program of adding a very small amount of the mineral, fluoride, to the amount found naturally in our drinking water. Here is the City's website for more information and links: www.sandiego.gov/water/quality/fluoridation.shtml

Why add fluoride to the water supply?

- Fluoride is needed for strong, healthy teeth and bones.
- Scientists have shown that a small adjustment in the amount of fluoride in water helps protect teeth from developing cavities.
- The amount of fluoride added is about **1000 times less** than the amount in most fluoride toothpaste. This amount is similar to 1 drop in a million drops of water, or 1 cent in 10,000 dollars.
- People, plants, fish and other animals are not harmed by this additional fluoride. Most soil, rocks and all water sources contain some fluoride naturally.

How does fluoride work?

- Sugar "feeds" bacteria in the mouth, which then release an acid that dissolves the minerals in tooth enamel. This can create a hole—a cavity.
- When children drink water with the right amount of extra fluoride, their tooth enamel will become stronger against this acid attack.
- At all ages extra fluoride in saliva helps return minerals to enamel, making it stronger against the acid. This can stop tiny cavities from getting bigger.

What if I have more questions?

- Your health provider is the best resource for any medical or dental concerns.
- Extra fluoride in drops or tablets for children may not be needed. Ask the doctor or dentist who prescribed the extra fluoride if it should be continued.
- Also ask your baby's doctor or your dentist about using tap water with baby formula concentrates, if that is the main source of your baby's nutrition.

What about bottled water?

- Most bottled water does not have enough fluoride to protect teeth from cavities.
- Our tap water is safe to drink. If you feel more treatment is needed or you dislike the water's taste, you may use a pitcher that has a water filter, or a filter that attaches to your faucet. These **carbon filters will not remove** the extra fluoride.
- A reverse osmosis system will remove most fluoride from the water.
- Fluoride is not removed by boiling. It continues to help prevent cavities when used to make soups, cereals or drinks.

What else can we do to avoid cavities?

- It is still important to use fluoride toothpaste. For young children, use a tiny smear twice a day until the child is old enough to spit it out.
- See your dentist and dental hygienist twice a year for a full exam; take your child by age one. They will have more prevention tips for you and your family.

The San Diego County Dental Society www.sdcds.org/fluoridation
for further information: San Diego Fluoridation Coalition 619-444-6463 sandiegosmiles@cox.net