



2025 Iowa Water Fluoridation Census

The Iowa Water Fluoridation Census provides detailed information on fluoride levels in public water systems across the state and serves as a resource for local public health officials, dental and medical professionals, and community members to support informed decision-making about oral health.

Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the natural level of fluoride in drinking water to the optimal concentration of 0.7 mg/L¹ to help prevent tooth decay. While most water sources — including ground, surface, and seawater — contain some fluoride, levels are typically too low to effectively protect against tooth decay. Adjusting fluoride levels ensures communities receive proven oral-health benefits in a safe and cost-effective way.

Tooth decay remains one of the most common chronic diseases, affecting individuals of all ages. About one in five people have untreated tooth decay which can negatively impact employment, social development, self-esteem and overall quality of life. Improving access to optimally fluoridated water is one of the most effective population-level strategies available to reduce these disparities and promote better oral health for all Iowans.

Facts about Community Water Fluoridation:

- Fluoride is natural and the 13th most common mineral found in the Earth's crust².
- Every \$1 invested in fluoride saves \$32 in dental treatment costs³.
- Children in fluoridated communities average two fewer cavities than those living in similar communities without fluoridation⁴.
- Fluoridation reduces tooth decay by at least 25% in adults and children³.

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2011/01/13/2011-637/proposed-hhs-recommendation-for-fluoride-concentration-in-drinking-water-for-prevention-of-dental>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/faq/index.html>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/about/index.html>

⁴ <https://thecommunityguide.org/findings/dental-caries-cavities-community-water-fluoridation.html>

Community Water Fluoridation Definitions

Public Water Supply: A system that provides water for human consumption that has at least 15 service connections or serves at least 25 people at least 60 days during the year. Examples of public water systems include cities, homeowners' associations, mobile home parks, nursing homes and rural water supplies.

Adjusted: A water system that adds fluoride to achieve optimal fluoride level of 0.7 mg/L.

Natural: A water system that has a natural fluoride concentration at or above 0.6 mg/L. No fluoride is added to the system.

Non-Adjusted: A water system that has a natural fluoride level at or below 0.59 mg/L. No fluoride is added. The system does not purchase water from another system.

Consecutive: A water system that purchases water from another water system. The consecutive water system has a water plant but does little or no treatment to the water. These water systems are optimally fluoridated if the original (i.e. parent) system is optimally fluoridated. No additional fluoride is added to the consecutive system.

Multi-Source: A water system that receives water from numerous sources. It may get water from two or three other water systems while also supplying some water through its own wells. The fluoridation status depends on the fluoridation status of the different water systems. No additional fluoride is added.

Defluoridated: A water system that has very high natural fluoride levels. The finished water fluoride concentration delivered to consumers is reduced either by a treatment process which removes fluoride from the water or water with high fluoride is blended with waters with a low fluoride concentration.

Information about Iowa's Water Fluoridation Census

The fluoride levels in this report represent a single point in time. When a water system adjusts its fluoride levels, daily testing is required. By law, these daily results must be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) Community Water Fluoridation Coordinator works with water system operators and the DNR to collect and report this data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Water Fluoridation Reporting System (WFRS).

Public water systems that do not add fluoride, are connected to another water source (consecutive systems), or rely on natural fluoride, testing is only required every three to nine years and monthly fluoride reports are not required to be sent to the DNR.

Iowa's Community Water Fluoridation Data

Community Water Systems in Iowa in 2025		
	Total Number of Systems	Population Served
All Water Systems	1,070	2,666,813
Fluoridated		
Adjusted	124	1,470,643
Natural	203	328,704
Defluoridated	1	1,533
Consecutive	209	429,694
Multi-Source	10	133,919
Total	547	2,364,493
Non-Fluoridated		
Non-Adjusted	489	287,075
Consecutive	34	15,245
Total	518	302,320

2025 Community Water Fluoridation Update

In 2025, Iowa saw an increase in water fluoridation challenges. Iowa HHS supported twenty-one communities and eleven ultimately discontinued fluoridation. The increase in challenges highlights the need for continued education on the safety and effectiveness of fluoridation.

Iowa had 1,070 public water systems serving 2,666,813 residents. One hundred twenty-four systems adjusted fluoride levels, serving 1,470,643 people; 489 did not adjust levels, serving 287,075 people. Overall, 88.7% of Iowans received fluoridated water, though only 68.2% were served by systems maintaining the optimal level of 0.6–1.0 mg/L - an increase from 44.3% in the previous year.

To find the fluoride level in a community's drinking water visit the [CDC's My Water's Fluoride Website](#). Data used by this site is updated monthly by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. For additional information on Iowa's water fluoridation, decay rates, and dental professional shortage areas, see the ArcGIS [CWF Impact Map](#).