

E-mail Message

From: Anthony Gill [SMTP:Anthony.Gill@tga.gov.au]
To: Bill.Turner [SMTP:Bill.Turner@tga.gov.au]
Cc: [REDACTED]

Sent: 13/3/2014 at 9:18 AM
Received:
Subject: Draft TGA web statement re regulation of fluoride used in water
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Attachments: Regulation of fluoride used in drinking water.DOCX

Dear all

After significant internal discussion the TGA has drafted the attached web statement re the regulation of fluoride used in drinking water. Before we put it on our website I am circulating it to you so you are aware of what we will be saying and getting any comments you might have on it. As you will note it is not lengthy.

- Regulation of fluoride used in drinking water.DOCX

If any of you have the contact details of the appropriate people in SA, NSW and the ACT so I can send it to them it would be appreciated if you could provide them to me.

Regards

Tony

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DRAFT

Fluoride in drinking water

Fluoride is the collective term for compounds containing the element fluorine. Fluoride occurs naturally in the soil and dissolves into groundwater in some parts of the world, including in some areas in Australia. As early as 1912, it was observed that areas with naturally occurring fluoride in drinking water, including Queensland, had better dental health than areas where there was no fluoride in the drinking water.

This link was confirmed in the 1940s and it is now known that fluoride in drinking water plays a role in both preventing and repairing dental caries by remineralising enamel.

In the 1950s, because of the demonstrated public health benefits of naturally occurring fluoride in drinking water, water authorities in Australia and other parts of the world began adjusting the levels of fluoride.

Regulated by the states and territories

In Australia, fluoridation of drinking water supplies is regulated by the states and territories, which apply the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2006, published by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). These guidelines recommend an optimal level of fluoride in drinking water of between 0.7 mg per litre and 1 mg per litre.

At levels above 1.5 mg per litre, fluoride can cause dental fluorosis (a mottling of the teeth) or above 4 mg per litre, skeletal fluorosis (a painful condition of the bones and joints). For this reason, the NHMRC drinking water guidelines recommend that fluoride levels should not exceed 1.5mg per litre and, in areas where the naturally occurring levels exceed this amount, recommend reducing the concentrations to the optimal level for the public health benefits by dilution or by using activated aluminium or bone char (Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2006. Page 720). There are no other known health problems associated with fluoride at these levels.

Fluoridated drinking water is not therapeutic goods within the definition of that term in the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*. The Therapeutic Goods Administration thus has no role in regulating fluoridated drinking water.

The TGA regulates other products containing fluoride in concentrations over 1.5 mg per litre that meet the definition of a therapeutic good.

For more information about fluoridation of drinking water in your area, contact your state or territory health department.