

# News Release

**Leavenworth Water Department**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WATER DEPARTMENT REDUCES FLUORIDE IN WATER SYSTEM**

**LEAVENWORTH, KS** – The Leavenworth Water Department has been adding fluoride to the Leavenworth public water supply since 2002, as directed by a vote of the citizens of Leavenworth. Recently, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that dissolved fluoride concentrations in drinking water should not exceed 0.7 milligrams per liter of water (mg/L or ppm). In response to this proposed guidance change, the Leavenworth Water Department began reducing the amount of fluoride it puts into the public water supply so as to not exceed 0.7 mg/L concentration.

On January 7, 2011, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that they are taking important steps to ensure that standards and guidelines on fluoride in drinking water continue to provide the maximum protection to the American people to support good dental health, especially in children. HHS is proposing that the recommended level of fluoride in drinking water can be set at the lowest end of the current optimal range to prevent tooth decay, and EPA is initiating review of the maximum amount of fluoride allowed in drinking water.

HHS' proposed recommendation of 0.7 mg/L fluoride concentration in drinking water replaces the current recommended range of 0.7 to 1.2 mg/L. This updated recommendation is based on recent EPA and HHS scientific assessments to balance the benefits of preventing tooth decay while limiting any unwanted health effects. These scientific assessments will also guide EPA in making a determination of whether to lower the maximum amount of fluoride allowed in drinking water, which is set to prevent adverse health effects. In response to this recommended change, the Water Department took immediate steps to reduce the amount of fluoride in the Leavenworth drinking water system to not exceed 0.7 mg/L.

The new EPA assessments of fluoride were undertaken in response to findings of the National Academies of Science (NAS). At EPA's request, NAS reviewed new data on fluoride in 2006 and issued a report recommending that EPA update its health and exposure assessments to take into account bone and dental effects and to consider all sources of fluoride. In addition to EPA's new assessments and the NAS report, HHS also considered current levels of tooth decay and dental fluorosis and fluid consumption across the United States. HHS is expecting to publish final guidance for community water fluoridation by the spring 2011. Interested parties may view a prepublication version of the proposed recommendation at:

[http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2011pres/01/pre\\_pub\\_frn\\_fluoride.html](http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2011pres/01/pre_pub_frn_fluoride.html)

For more information about the national drinking water regulations for fluoride, refer to:  
<http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/basicinformation/fluoride.cfm>

For more information on EPA's fluoride assessment and to comment, go to:  
[http://water.epa.gov/action/advisories/drinking/fluoride\\_index.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/action/advisories/drinking/fluoride_index.cfm)

For more information about community water fluoridation, tooth decay prevention, and dental fluorosis, refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation>.

For more information about fluoride in the Leavenworth water system, customers should contact the Water Department at 913-682-1513.

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