

Sources of Fluoride in the United States

Fluoride is a mineral that helps keep teeth strong and prevents cavities. Fluoride is found in nature—in water, food, and soil—and is also added to some products to help protect teeth.

Here are the main ways people in the U.S. get fluoride:

DRINKING WATER



Most fluoride people get in the U.S. comes from drinking water. Some communities have natural fluoride in their water. In others, fluoride is added to help stop tooth decay. The federal government sets a limit for the amount of fluoride in drinking water, and advises on the optimal level. Local and state governments decide whether to add it. Because we use tap water for drinking, cooking, and making drinks, it provides about 60% of the fluoride people get.

TOOTHPASTE AND OTHER DENTAL PRODUCTS

Most toothpaste in the U.S. has fluoride in it. Fluoride is also in some mouth rinses, gels, and varnishes. People, especially kids, can swallow small amounts when they brush or use these products.



BABY FORMULA

Powdered and liquid baby formulas can have fluoride, especially if made with tap water that has fluoride in it. Soy-based formula usually has more fluoride than milk-based formula.

FOODS AND DRINKS

Most foods have only very small amounts of fluoride. Tea (especially black tea) has more fluoride because the tea plant takes it in from the soil. Other foods with some fluoride: coffee, canned shrimp and crab, oatmeal, potatoes, raisins, rice, and some juices.



SUPPLEMENTS AND MEDICATIONS

Some children may be prescribed fluoride drops or tablets by their healthcare provider or dentist if they live in areas without fluoridated water. A few prescription medicines also have small amounts of fluoride, but it's not the main ingredient.