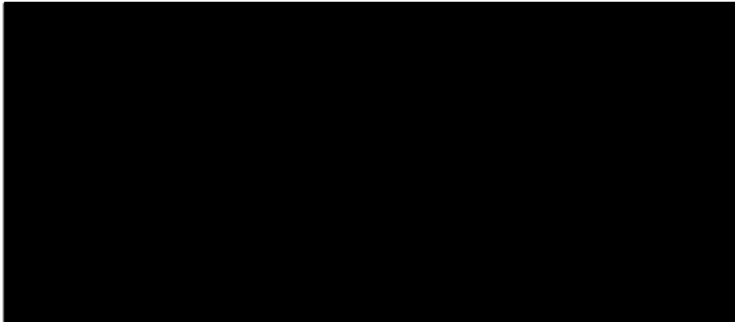


03 SEP 2019



Response to your request for official information

I refer to your email of 14 August 2019 requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- a) *if NZ uses HFSA to fluoridate our water*
- b) *whether we use SF or HFSA I want to see the evidence*
- c) *i want a copy of an invoice or receipt for product*
- d) *shipping packing slip example containing batch numbers, shipping date (anytime recently), country of origin, etc*
- e) *ideally, if you have it, a copy of the 1970s request to add fluoride to NZ's water*

I address the matters you raised below.

- a) *if NZ uses HFSA to fluoridate our water*

There are three chemical compounds used to fluoridate water in New Zealand, namely hydrofluorosilicic acid (HFA), sodium silicofluoride powder and sodium fluoride powder. The majority of community water fluoridation in New Zealand is carried out with HFA.

Studies have shown that HFA is effectively 100 percent dissociated to form fluoride ions under water treatment conditions, with bioavailability comparable to naturally occurring fluoride in water. Fluoride ions in solution and in water are identical regardless of their source.

Fluoride used in water treatment in New Zealand is purchased from chemical supply companies and conforms to industry standards for quality and purity. The industry standards are part of the guidelines supporting the Drinking-Water Standards for New Zealand 1995 (Revised 2008). The Drinking-Water Standards are publicly available on the Ministry of Health's (the Ministry) website. The Industry Standards are available on Water New Zealand's website.

Drinking water suppliers are required to monitor the level of fluoride to ensure that it does not exceed the maximum acceptable value as prescribed in the Drinking-water Standards for New Zealand. The Annual Report on Drinking-water Quality 2017/18 is available to view on the Ministry website on <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/annual-report-drinking-water-quality-2017-2018>.

b) *whether we use SF or HFSA I want to see the evidence*

The August 2014 report '*Health effects of water fluoridation: A review of the scientific evidence*', published on behalf of the Royal Society of New Zealand and the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor (the Report), comprehensively reviewed the scientific evidence on the efficacy and safety of community water fluoridation. Pages 22–24 of the Report refer to sources on the safety of fluorine-containing compounds, including HFA.

The Report found that there are no significant adverse effects of community water fluoridation within the range of concentrations currently recommended by the Ministry and used in New Zealand and provides compelling evidence of dental health benefits for New Zealanders. The Report is available on the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor's website at: www.pmcsa.org.nz.

c) *i want a copy of an invoice or receipt for product*

d) *shipping packing slip example containing batch numbers, shipping date (anytime recently), country of origin, etc*

Parts c) and d) of your request are refused pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Ministry. The chemical compounds used for community water fluoridation are sourced by local authorities or water treatment companies contracted by local authorities.

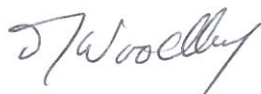
e) *ideally, if you have it, a copy of the 1970s request to add fluoride to NZ's water*

The use of water fluoridation first began in New Zealand in Hastings in 1954. A Commission of Inquiry was held in 1957 and then its use rapidly expanded in the mid-1960s. The decision to introduce fluoridation to water has been made by local authorities who have the power to supply water for their district (section 379, Local Government Act 1974). This is available at: www.legislation.govt.nz. Therefore, part e) of your request is refused pursuant to section 18(d) of the Act, as the information requested is publicly available.

I trust this information fulfils your request. You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Woodley

**Deputy Director-General
Population Health and Prevention**