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Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 20 November 2022 for information regarding fluoridation. You requested:

- 1. Is fluoride approved in this country New Zealand and or Aotearoa as safe to consume via water ways and dentistry*

Medsafe is the New Zealand Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Authority. Many fluoride products that are for use for prevention and treatment of dental caries, especially those used by dentists, are medicines and approval for distribution as a medicine is required before they can be sold, supplied or advertised. The pre-market assessment of these products that precedes the recommendation for approval is performed by Medsafe and is based on international medicines assessment requirements and includes assessment of the active raw material (fluoride) and the finished product. One of the requirements is that the active ingredient and strength is specified on the product label. Information on the medicines approval process is published on the Medsafe website at <https://www.medsafe.govt.nz/Medicines/regulatory-approval-process.asp>.

Access to these products varies depending on the strength of fluoride, the pack size and the claims made for the product. Some medicines are available from a supermarket, some only from a pharmacy, some only from a pharmacist and some only on prescription by an authorised prescriber. Information on what fluoride products have been approved can be searched on the Medsafe website at <https://www.medsafe.govt.nz/regulatory/dbsearch.asp>. You can search by ingredient, sodium fluoride or sodium monofluorophosphate.

Many toothpastes commonly available from supermarkets and other retailers are not regarded as medicines and are, instead, controlled under the Cosmetic Products Group Standard administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These products have a lower concentration of fluoride and may only be recommended for prevention of tooth decay or improving oral hygiene.

Manatū Hauora recommends community water fluoridation as a safe and effective way to prevent and reduce tooth decay for everyone. Between 0.7 and 1.0 parts per million is the optimal amount that provides protection against tooth decay, poses no significant health risks and is recommended by many national and international health bodies, including the World Health Organization.

2. Who approves fluoride in dentistry for use on children in this country

The approved indications for the use of each fluoride medicine are specified in the product datasheet or consumer medicine information published on the Medsafe website. Manatū Hauora also have guidelines on its use: [Guidelines for the Use of Fluorides \(health.govt.nz\)](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-services/fluoride-guidelines).

3. Multiple studies show fluoride is a toxic product of phosphate mining, it us being used on our children in dentistry and if used would be considered as a drug which means to administer you would need a prescription how does a dentist aquire the prescription to administer a drug without a script when oral checks are performed

Dentists can prescribe fluoride applications that have been approved as medicines and are within their scope of practice. Hygienists, dental therapists and oral health therapists are also able to apply preventive agents, such as fluoride, either within their own scope of practice or under the direct clinical supervision of a dentist or dental specialist. Further information can be found on the Dental Council New Zealand website: <https://www.dcnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Consultations/2019/Consultation-on-scope-of-practice-and-prescribed-qualifications/Gazette-notice-update-scopes-of-practice-and-prescribed-qualifications-after-consult-25Feb20.pdf>.

4. How does the ministry of health feel in regard to toxic water being redistributed into our environment - imagine this toxic water in a 3 waters programme - how will the ministry deem mass bone density changes and IQ levels being dulled which studies show is infact the side effects

5. Please provide evidentiary records of where it has been deemed safe

Community water fluoridation has been evidentially established, through significant research, as safe, effective and affordable. The World Health Organization and other international and national health and scientific experts endorse water fluoridation as the most effective public health measure for the prevention of dental decay.

In 2014, the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor and the Royal Society of New Zealand reviewed the substantial body of scientific evidence on the efficacy and safety of fluoridation of public water supplies. In June 2021, after considering new research on fluoridation and comprehensive reviews published since 2014, the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor found the conclusions of the Royal Society Te Aparangi remain appropriate. These reviews found that there were no adverse effects of fluoride of any significance arising from fluoridation at the levels used in New Zealand.

These reviews are publicly available and can be found at:
www.pmcsa.ac.nz/topics/fluoridation-an-update-on-evidence/.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



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