



## Nau mai haere mai,

Welcome to the 11th issue of the On Tap newsletter. This is the final issue of this newsletter as the National Fluoridation Information Service (NFIS) will be finishing on 20 January 2015, as explained in the following information from the Ministry of Health.



# NFIS

National Fluoridation  
Information Service

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH NOTICE

As many in the health sector and local government are aware, the Ministry of Health has decided not to renew the current agreement for the provision of the National Fluoridation Information Service (NFIS) after its expiry on 20 January 2015. It is now timely for the Ministry to review the type and scope of national services that may be required in future in relation to community water fluoridation.

Over approximately the past year, the Ministry has at times flagged in sector discussions that it was likely to issue an RFP for future scientific and advisory services on water fluoridation following the expiry of the current NFIS agreement. This approach is in accordance with the Government Rules of Sourcing and does not reflect adversely on the quality of the work done by Hutt Valley DHB and its consortium partners in the delivery of the National Fluoridation Information Service. The Ministry acknowledges the independent, high-quality scientific and advisory work carried out and published under the auspices of NFIS over the last four years.

The Ministry notes that the science relevant to community water fluoridation has been stable and conclusive for many years, as verified by numerous international reports. Moreover, the NFIS reviews of published scientific literature have continued to validate the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation, and thus the appropriateness of the Ministry's policy in New Zealand.

In August this year, the Royal Society of New Zealand and the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor jointly published the report: Health effects of water fluoridation: A review of the scientific evidence. This report found that community water fluoridation within the range of concentrations currently recommended by the Ministry of Health and used in New Zealand poses no health risks, and provides compelling evidence of dental health benefits for New Zealanders. The report recommended that a similar review be repeated every ten years, or earlier if a large well-designed study is published that appears likely to have shifted the balance between health benefit and health risk.

Accordingly, the Ministry considers that the review within New Zealand of the international science related to community water fluoridation can be undertaken less frequently than under the current NFIS arrangements.

In the meantime, following the expiry of the NFIS agreement and until new arrangements are in place, the Ministry of Health will continue to provide support on fluoridation issues to DHBs and local authorities as it always has done. The first point of contact is [oralhealth@moh.govt.nz](mailto:oralhealth@moh.govt.nz), ph 04 0800 855 066.

The extensive information published on the NFIS website to date will be migrated from the Regional Public Health website to the Ministry's website ([Ministry of Health NZ](http://Ministry of Health NZ)) to ensure the continuing public availability of this information.

# fluoride in the news



## MAJOR REVIEW OF SAFETY OF COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION IN NEW ZEALAND

As the Ministry of Health article mentions, in October the major review titled *Health Effects of Water Fluoridation: a Review of the Scientific Evidence* was released. The review was commissioned by Sir Peter Gluckman, the New Zealand Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor and Sir David Skegg, President of the Royal Society of New Zealand at the request of Auckland City on behalf of several local councils.

The review which examined the scientific evidence on the efficacy and safety of community water fluoridation in New Zealand was carried out by a panel of five experts and was peer reviewed internationally. The review concluded that "...from a medical and public health perspective, water fluoridation at the levels used in New Zealand poses no significant health risks and is effective at reducing the prevalence and severity of tooth decay in communities where it is used". Access the full review [here](#).

## HIGH COURT JUDGMENT

New Health New Zealand Inc. (NHNZ) recently applied to the High Court to have Hydrofluorosilicic Acid (HFA) and Sodium Silico Fluoride (SSF) (currently used to fluoridate domestic water supplies in New Zealand), declared medicines under the Medicines Act 1981 (the Act). The application was opposed by the Solicitor-General on behalf of the Minister of Health. The judge dismissed the application, ruling that HFA and SSF are not medicines under the Act. Read the full judgment [here](#).

## NEW INFORMATION AVAILABLE @ nfis.org.nz

NFIS has several new publications that will be available on the website in the New Year.

These are:

- Reviews of the Literature on community water fluoridation July - December 2013 and January - June 2014. These reviews summarise the findings of national and international research relevant to community water fluoridation in New Zealand, published over these time periods.
- A new NFIS advisory "A review of the literature on the safety of exclusively feeding infants formula prepared with optimally fluoridated drinking water".
- NFIS Enviroscan for period March 2013- July 2014 which gives a summary of community water fluoridation activity around New Zealand over this time period.

## Goodbye and thank you

From the NFIS team we would like to say farewell to all the staff we have worked with from DHBs, public health units and local councils over the past four years. It has been our pleasure to have worked with you. We have strived to provide the highest quality independent scientific information on community water fluoridation and hope this information will continue to be of help to you. Finally we would like to say a special thank you to our Consortium Partners, previous NFIS staff, (Emmeline Haymes, Torunn Borsting, Melanie Martin and Kathie McCarten), and the Ministry of Health.

Mere Kirihimete,  
from the NFIS Team.



**NFIS**  
National Fluoridation  
Information Service

NFIS CONSORTIUM PARTNERS:

**Regional Public Health**  
Better Health For The Wellington Region

