

KENTUCKY CABINET FOR HEALTH SERVICES
Information for Parents or Guardians
Private Providers
Fluoride Supplement Program

As you know, almost all children suffer from tooth decay. This causes pain, loss of time from school and can be very costly to treat.

Drinking fluoridated water is the best way to stop tooth decay. Most community drinking water systems and rural schools that have their own water supplies have added fluoride to the water. However, some families live in rural areas where the water supply is not fluoridated.

If you have preschool children who are not drinking fluoridated water or taking vitamins with fluoride, you should give them the essential nutrient, fluoride, yourself. Daily fluoride supplement drops or chewable tablets are available, free of charge through your local health department, your physician or dentist.

By giving your child the proper amount of fluoride supplement each day, you can prevent up to 50% of tooth decay that would normally occur. The proper amount of fluoride to be given to your child each day depends on how much fluoride is in your drinking water. A simple lab test of your home water supply will tell you how much fluoride is in the water and the amount of supplement that may be needed. This water test is for fluoride only. No other lab test will be made. Instructions for this test are on the other side of this sheet.

If you move to a different location while your child is receiving fluoride drops or tablets, or if you change your drinking water supply, you should quit using the fluoride supplement until you can find out how much fluoride is in your new water supply. Ask your health care provider about your new water supply. You may have to send in another water sample for fluoride testing. If there is enough fluoride in your new drinking water supply, your child will no longer need to take fluoride drops or tablets. If this is the case, you should get rid of the drops or tablets in such a way that children can not get them - flush them down the commode or return them to the place you got them (your local health department, physician or dentist.)

When your child starts to school (including Head Start), the fluoride supplement probably will no longer be needed. This will depend on the amount of fluoride in the school's drinking water. In most cases school drinking water will be fluoridated. If the school water supply does not have enough fluoride, your child should continue to receive the supplement throughout the school years, including high school (or until the school water supply is fluoridated).

When bottled water is the primary source of drinking water for children, check the label to find out if the fluoride content of the water is listed. If the fluoride content of bottled water is not listed on the bottle label, there are several sources of information, which can be helpful in determining the fluoride content of different brands of bottled water. Generally, bottled water has a 1-800 phone number printed on the label to call to learn the fluoride content of the bottled water. Additional sources for learning the fluoride content of bottled water can be found at International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) Information Hotline: 1-800-WATER-11 or the International Bottled Water Association Website <http://www.bottledwater.org/default.htm>. If the

fluoride content of the bottled water was not available from the sources listed above, contact your local health care provider to obtain a water sample test kit.

Large amounts of fluoride taken at one time can make a child sick and too much fluoride over a long period of time can cause a child's teeth to become discolored. Fluoride drops or tablets must be stored out of the reach of children and instructions for giving the supplements should be followed closely.

PARENTS HOME WATER SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS

Before your child can be given fluoride drops or tablets, it is necessary to determine how much natural fluoride is in your home water supply.

1. Fill the water sample tube with drinking water used in your home. (Fill to within ½ inch of the top of the tube.)
2. Place the cap firmly in the tube to prevent leaking.
3. Wipe the outside of the filled tube.
4. Complete the form (LAB 505-C) provided including the information for child/ren and parent/guardian, address, telephone number and source of water supply.
5. Wrap the completed form (including all copies) around the tube and place the form and filled tube in the styrofoam mailing carton.
6. Remove the paper backing from the green business reply-mailing label and wrap it around the mailing carton.
7. Mail the carton (which needs no postage) with its green business-reply mailing label. If the mailing label has been lost, send the water sample to:

KY Public Health Laboratory
100 Sower Blvd.
North Loading Dock
PO Box 2020
Frankfort, KY 40602-2020

8. Mail the water sample to the KY Public Health Laboratory so that the **water sample will arrive prior to 28 days from the date you received the test kit from your health care provider.** Water samples deteriorate over time, so analyzing within 28 days ensures an accurate result. This complies with EPA drinking water regulations; therefore, **water samples received after 28 days from the date you received the kit will not be tested.**