

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

## Some Young Children Get Too Much Fluoride In Caring for Teeth

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THE FLUORIDATION of public water systems in the U.S. since 1945 is often hailed as one of the great public-health advances made in the past half century. But a new study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control just completed a study, to be published early next year, showing that children are exposed to fluoride from a variety of sources, including drinking water, toothpaste, fluoride supplements and grape juice. "There probably is an excess exposure," says Dr. Shaddix, fluoride team leader at the CDC's division of health.

For years, groups [including some of top scientists in the world] have opposed the fluoridation of public water systems, blaming fluoride for ailments ranging from allergies to cancer. But the CDC is quick to say excess fluoride causes problems that are cosmetic, with no other adverse health consequences. Fluoride does occur naturally in many foods, including tea. The CDC says the biggest problem is an apparent increase

in dental fluorosis, an unsightly and permanent discoloration of teeth. Fluorosis is caused by overexposure to fluoride at a young age. Children under six years old are particularly vulnerable. A recent national study found that

22% of U.S. children have some form of dental fluorosis. Bleaching agents often use fluoride. "A whole lot less need supplements," says Dr. Shaddix. "Pediatricians and dentists routinely give out fluoride supplements in fluoridated areas. But you put those two together, and you could get a big problem with fluorosis." The CDC also wants doctors and dentists to get a better idea of a child's eating and drinking habits before prescribing supplements. Some juice and fluoride than some grape content of as per million, the part per fluoridated water. between two and 10 parts per million of fluoride. Colas, soft drinks and juices that are bottled in areas where the public water supply is fluoridated also contain fluoride. The CDC is calling for new labeling rules requiring manufacturers to list a product's fluoride content. If parents fear their child isn't getting enough fluoride, they should talk with their doctor about other possible sources,

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Children may have too much fluoride in their diets - CDC



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