

Preventing Fluorosis

In Virginia, there are geological pockets of natural occurring fluoride. The natural fluoride in the drinking water has limited the need for fluoridation, supplements, rinses and may require steps to limit the effects of fluorosis. Fluorosis can range from slight white flecks in the enamel of teeth to more severe brown staining and pitting of the enamel of teeth. The areas in Virginia with natural fluoride levels, which can affect the appearance of permanent teeth, include among others Franklin City, Isle of Wight, Lancaster, Northumberland, Southampton, Suffolk and Town of Smithfield (see map). Water does not follow geographic lines. Fluoride levels can vary from well to well and should be tested to know the exact amount of naturally occurring fluoride. For more information on testing see “Determining Fluoride Concentrations and Water Testing” fact sheet.

Recommendations based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention August 2001 Report:

- Use an alternative water source for children age nine years old or under whose primary drinking water contains more than 2 parts per million of fluoride.
- Be aware of Food and Drug Agency labeling on products, which indicates parents or caregivers, should consult a dentist or other health care provider before introducing a child below age two years to fluoride toothpaste.
- Promote the use of small amounts of toothpaste among children age six years or under (due to inadvertent swallowing).
- Stress the supervised use of fluoride toothpaste among all children six years or under to limit excessive use and ingestion (due to inadvertent swallowing).