

Milton to add fluoride to H2O

Grant will allow city to replace fluoride injectors

By Ryan Arvay, Florida Freedom Newspapers



The City of Milton will be adding fluoride to water once again at the latest by June 2008, after receiving a grant to replace the old injection system from the Florida Department of Health.

The City of Milton will once again be adding Fluoride to their municipal water sources due to a \$20,000 grant from the Florida Department of Health.

Milton had been adding fluoridation to the water since 1989, but stopped in late 2006 when the City Council voted to discontinue it due to an older, unreliable injection system.

According to the World Health Organization, “many communities world wide lack sufficient natural fluoride in their drinking water to prevent [cavities and tooth decay].”

The grant money received by the City will cover the cost of completely replacing the old system and a year’s worth of fluoride, reports Brian Watkins, Public Works Director for the City.

Watkins says the earliest the City will have the new equipment installed and operating is spring of 2008, although the money must be spent by June of next year.

The question to use fluoride or not is a sensitive subject, with opposing viewpoints holding fast to ideas backed up by professionals on both sides of the debate.

When he started in the dental profession 30 years ago, local dentist Noel Spurlock D.D.S relates, “there’s no way we could keep up with the cases of decay,” a reality which he says has changed since then. “[Fluoride] has made more of a difference in my profession than anything,” he says.

The American Dental Association says they have continuously endorsed fluoridation of community water since 1950.

While fluoride has been recognized as an effective way to reduce tooth decay, too much fluoride can result in the mottling and discoloration of one’s teeth, called dental fluorosis.

Others call its use too much governmental control over personal choice, or “mass medication.”

Some even claim fluoride causes bone cancer. In a recent study conducted by Harvard University scientists claim to have found a connection between osteosarcoma (bone cancer) and fluoride, especially in young boys exposed between the ages of six and eight.

Dr. Spurlock says he thinks such studies are conducted using “scientific bias” and contends, “anything in huge amounts can cause cancer.”

He states the amount of fluoridation used in water is so miniscule as to strengthen the teeth, but do no harm. "We're talking microns." he says, possibly .25 parts per million. Spurlock says fluoride also saves millions in health care costs.

The City of Milton's Water System—which encompasses the area north of Whiting Field to Highway 90 and East of Pond Creek to the Blackwater River—receives its water from six wells, all of which will be equipped to receive fluoride injections.

The injection system will provide a small but constant supply of fluoride into the water at each well site, and will be monitored by licensed operators for at least an hour each day of the week to ensure the correct levels are being administered.

In 2006, according to the Florida Department of Health, 77.6% of Florida's population served by community water systems received optimally fluoridated water.