

On January 7, 2011, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the US Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) recommended an adjustment in the recommended levels of fluoride in drinking water from a previous optimum range of 0.7 mg/L to 1.2 mg/L to a set optimal level of .7 mg/L. KDHE recommends Kansas water systems fluoridate their water at the lower target level of 0.7 mg/L, as suggested by EPA and HHS. WaterOne maintains a fluoride level of 0.7 mg/L, which is well below established standards, and within the range recently recommended by the American Dental Association.

The adjustment reflects new research that suggests children receive fluoride from many sources (toothpaste, processed foods), so less fluoride in the water is necessary to achieve the oral health benefits. These new recommendations reflect the fact that optimally fluoridated water continues to be a safe and cost-effective community strategy to reduce dental disease. Evidence has indicated that communities that fluoridate their water have been able to reduce tooth decay in their citizens by 20-40 percent. This announcement should not cause alarm, the EPA and HHS are just exercising their responsibilities to review and adjust standards to reflect current science. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment continues to support community water fluoridation as a safe and effective public health measure to reduce dental disease among its citizens.