

Fluoride

Efforts to stop fluoride in drinking water have gained traction in recent years, driven by a mix of public health concerns, political actions, and advocacy groups. Below is an overview of the current landscape based on available information:

Legislative and Policy Efforts

- **Utah:** In March 2025, Utah's Republican-controlled legislature passed a bill banning fluoride in public water supplies unless additives are directly tied to water quality. This move reflects a growing trend in some states to reverse fluoridation mandates.
- **Florida:** The Florida Senate passed a bill in April 2025 to ban fluoride in public water, with the measure now moving to the House and potentially to Governor Ron DeSantis for approval. Posts on X indicate strong local support, framing the ban as a move to "hydrate, not medicate."
- **Federal Level:** Robert F. Kennedy Jr., appointed as U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary, has directed the CDC to review its fluoride recommendations, aiming to stop its addition to drinking water. In April 2025, Kennedy, alongside EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin, announced a review of fluoride's health impacts, citing concerns about IQ loss and neurological issues at high exposure levels. This aligns with Kennedy's claim that fluoride is an "industrial waste" linked to various health problems, though these claims are contested by health experts.
- **Other States:** Lawmakers in Georgia, Kentucky, and Nebraska have introduced bills to end fluoride mandates in larger communities. In Kentucky, Representative Mark Hart has been pushing to reverse the state's 1954 fluoridation mandate since 2018, emphasizing local control over water content.

Local Actions

- **Recent Bans:** Local governments in Collier County, Florida, Union County, North Carolina, Amery, Wisconsin, State College, Pennsylvania, and Brushy Creek, Texas, have voted to stop fluoridating water in the past couple of years. These decisions often cite health concerns, cost, or personal choice, as seen in Union County, where Commissioner Brian Helms prioritized consent.
- **Buffalo, New York:** Residents filed a class-action lawsuit against the city after it quietly ended fluoridation, claiming harm to children's oral health. This highlights a divide, as Buffalo has since committed to maintaining fluoride despite federal pushes to remove it.
- **Rutland, Vermont:** In 2024, residents voted on whether to continue fluoridation, marking the second such vote in a decade.

Advocacy and Public Sentiment

- **Anti-Fluoride Groups:** Organizations like the Fluoride Action Network and Moms For Liberty are actively pushing for fluoride removal, arguing it's a form of mass medication or citing studies suggesting risks like neurotoxicity. These groups have fueled lawsuits, including one against the EPA to regulate fluoride as a toxin.
- **Public Health Pushback:** The American Dental Association (ADA), CDC, and other health organizations staunchly defend fluoridation, citing decades of evidence showing it reduces cavities by 25% and is safe at 0.7 mg/L. The ADA has called anti-fluoride efforts "pseudo-

scientific” and warns of increased dental issues, especially in underserved communities, if fluoridation stops.

Legal Developments

- **EPA Ruling:** In September 2024, U.S. District Judge Edward Chen ruled that the EPA must address fluoride’s potential cognitive risks, citing a National Toxicology Program report suggesting a link to lower IQ in children at levels above 1.5 mg/L—over twice the recommended 0.7 mg/L. The ruling didn’t ban fluoridation but prompted further scrutiny.
- **Lawsuits:** Over 100 lawsuits have targeted fluoridation over the years, though most have failed. A current case by Food and Water Watch and anti-fluoride groups seeks to ban the practice entirely.

Evidence from Cessation Studies

- **Impact of Removal:** Studies from Juneau, Alaska, and Calgary, Canada, show significant increases in cavities among children after fluoride was removed from water supplies. In Juneau, dental procedures rose 25.2% among kids after fluoridation ended in 2007. Calgary saw similar trends after halting fluoridation in 2011, prompting a reversal in 2023.
- **Israel:** After removing fluoride in 2014, Israel saw a rise in childhood cavities, reinforcing concerns about cessation.

Broader Context

- **Alternative Sources:** With fluoride in toothpaste, mouthwash, and dental treatments, some argue water fluoridation is redundant. Yet, the CDC emphasizes its cost-effectiveness and equity in reaching low-income communities.
- **Global Perspective:** Many countries, including most of Europe, reduce cavities without water fluoridation, relying on topical fluoride products. This fuels arguments that systemic fluoridation may not be necessary.