



## **FDI DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT (revision)**

### **Promoting Oral Health Through Fluoride**

**Submitted for adoption by the FDI General Assembly:  
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**Original version “Promoting Dental Health through Fluoride” adopted by the FDI  
General Assembly**

**November 2000 in Paris, France**

**Original Version reconfirmed in September 2008 in Stockholm, Sweden**

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#### **2 CONTEXT**

3 Despite the efforts to date, dental caries, which affects children, adults including the  
4 elderly, continues to be the most prevalent chronic disease worldwide and constitutes a  
5 major global public health challenge<sup>1</sup>. It can hinder an individual’s ability to speak, smile,  
6 smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow and stop a person to convey a range of emotions  
7 through facial expressions with confidence and without pain or discomfort<sup>2</sup>. Dental caries  
8 can also potentiate the risk of some systemic diseases. Maintaining good oral health is  
9 therefore, critical to securing overall health and well-being.<sup>2</sup>

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11 There are many social determinants of health that contribute to oral health inequities,  
12 causing increased prevalence and severity of dental caries among disadvantaged  
13 populations<sup>3</sup>. Dental caries can be prevented, managed or treated in its initial non-  
14 cavitated stage, through the adoption of evidence-based measures such as: avoiding  
15 unhealthy diets like sugary foods and drinks, particularly those rich in free sugar content,  
16 and implementing good oral hygiene habits, which include regular removal of oral biofilm  
17 from tooth surfaces and appropriate use of fluoride toothpaste.

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19 Fluoride ions in low concentrations at the tooth surfaces are essential to avoid, slow down  
20 or stop demineralization and to enhance remineralization of tooth tissue. <sup>4,5</sup>

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#### **22 SCOPE**

23 There are several cost-effective options to make fluoride available to populations, which  
24 can and should be applied according to country’s regional realities and legislation.

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26 Fluoride at an optimal preventive level may be present naturally in drinking water or can  
27 be added to water supplies through population-based public health interventions. Some  
28 public water supplies and wells have higher than recommended concentrations of  
29 naturally occurring fluoride, where defluoridation or alternative drinking water should be  
30 recommended. Water fluoridation is the most efficient, cost-effective, safe and equitable  
31 way in preventing, managing and treating carious lesions at a community level. Fluorides  
32 can, alternatively, be added to salt or milk, in the appropriate concentration and dose.<sup>4</sup>

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34 At an individual level, the use of fluoride toothpaste, fluoride mouthwashes, fluoride gels  
35 and/or fluoride varnishes have proven to be effective in managing, preventing and treating  
36 the early stages of dental caries, when used at recommended ages and levels, taking in  
37 account each country guidelines. <sup>4,5,6</sup>

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## 39 **DEFINITIONS**

40 **Fluoride role in Oral Health** - The preventive efficacy, cost-effectiveness and safety of  
41 fluoride-containing products in reducing the prevalence and severity of dental caries and  
42 delaying its onset has been proven<sup>3</sup>. It has been clinically shown that fluoride can also  
43 play a therapeutic role in the treatment of non-cavitated enamel carious lesions as well as  
44 in cavitated caries such as root caries lesions. This newly re-discovered characteristic of  
45 fluorides, always through topical action, reinforces the importance of its use in synergy  
46 with removal of plaque, in the fight against dental caries.

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## 48 **PRINCIPLES**

49 FDI urges all countries to recognize that universal access to appropriate and judicious use  
50 of fluoride for maintaining oral health as part of the basic human right to health.

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## 52 **POLICY**

53 FDI advocates the use of fluoride at the right concentration and dose, for management  
54 of dental caries, in prevention and/or treatment of early lesions for children, adults  
55 including the elderly and calls for the implementation of policies that:

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- 57 • Ensure population-wide public health measures that allow universal access to  
58 affordable fluoride in effective concentrations to prevent dental caries and  
59 promote oral health.
- 60 • Use the most appropriate means to disseminate information on the benefits of  
61 fluoride as a preventive agent in health promotion strategies and programs.
- 62 • Disseminate information about the importance of fluoride in the treatment of the  
63 non-cavitated carious lesions.

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- 65 • Encourage governments to reduce or remove taxation and tariffs on fluoride  
66 products for oral health.

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- 68 • Improve capacities of national food and drug administrations for better monitoring  
69 quality standards of toothpaste in line with ISO 11609:2017 and oral rinses in line  
70 with ISO 16408:2015.

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## 72 **KEYWORDS**

73 Dental caries, Oral public health, Oral health, Fluoride

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75 **DISCLAIMER**

76 The information in this Policy Statement was based on the best scientific evidence  
77 available at the time. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities and  
78 socio-economic constraints.

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