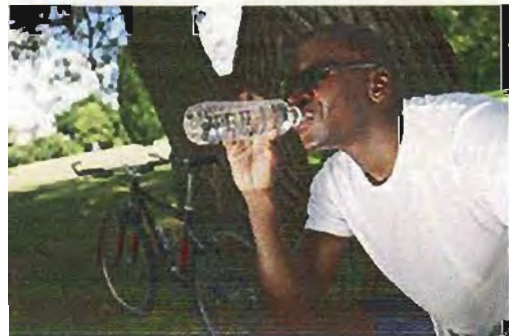


As more families turn to bottled water and away from the tap, they may be **missing out on one important ingredient** that most brands of bottled water fail to include: fluoride.

As of 2005, **bottled water is second only to soft drinks as the most popular drink in the United States**, beating out milk, juice, and – more significantly – tap water. Between 2001 and 2006, the amount of bottled water sold in the U.S. rose an average of 10% per year. And **many dental health specialists point to bottled water's increased popularity as the culprit behind rising rates of cavities.**



Because **fluoride helps strengthen teeth**, it is an important component of maintaining good oral health. The benefits of fluoride were noticed in the early part of the twentieth century, when researchers found communities with **low levels of tooth decay**. It turned out that these towns had measurable levels (around 1 part per million) of fluoride in their drinking water.

Beginning in the 1940s, **communities have fluoridated their water supplies**, and dentists have seen a significant decline in cavities ever since. **The American Dental Association endorses both community water fluoridation and the use of fluoride-containing products** as a safe means of preventing tooth decay. Between tap water and toothpaste, most of us get sufficient amounts of fluoride.

But if your family avoids fluoridated tap water in favor of ever-more-popular bottled water, **you could be missing out** on the levels of fluoride necessary to make a difference in your oral health.

If bottled water is your water of choice, **check the label to make sure**



that your brand contains fluoride. As of a 2006 decision, the FDA allows bottled water containing .6 to 1.0 milligrams per liter of fluoride to carry a label stating that fluoridated water may reduce the risk of dental cavities or tooth decay. The ADA has backed this decision.

Of course, **simply drinking fluoridated water is not a magic ticket to perfect teeth.** To keep your choppers in tip-top shape, it's important to brush and floss daily and avoid sugary sweets, in addition to maintaining your fluoride intake.

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