

European Food Standards Agency reinforces confidence in water fluoridation

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) updated review of fluoride intake earlier this year further enhances confidence in water fluoridation.

That's according to the British Fluoridation Society and the American Fluoridation Society, who in a joint statement have said:

The EFSA set safe intake levels for different age groups and concluded that fluoride exposure from drinking water at recommended levels 'does not pose a health concern.' Importantly, the EFSA also reaffirmed that fluoride levels in drinking water used in fluoridation schemes are well below the threshold associated with health risks. Concerns about cognitive effects, which have been raised by some opponents of fluoridation, were specifically addressed by the EFSA.

The Authority noted that studies claiming such effects were based on fluoride levels far higher than those used in fluoridation schemes, and often higher than naturally occurring concentrations in many parts of the world. Research from countries including Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, Spain and Sweden consistently shows no link between optimally fluoridated water and cognitive impairment.

While mild dental fluorosis can occur, the EFSA highlighted that this is primarily linked to children swallowing large amounts of fluoride toothpaste, not

drinking fluoridated water. Mild fluorosis results in faint white markings on enamel, does not damage teeth, and does not affect dental health or function.

Evidence also shows that water fluoridation provides unique benefits beyond fluoride toothpaste alone. Both pre-eruptive and post-eruptive exposure to fluoride are important for protecting teeth. Where fluoridation has been stopped, such as in Calgary, Canada, the result was a clear rise in tooth decay, leading to its reinstatement.

Tooth decay remains one of the most common chronic diseases worldwide, causing pain, infection, and avoidable treatment costs. Community water fluoridation is one of the most effective, equitable and safe ways to prevent decay and protect oral health, particularly for children and those in more deprived communities.

Despite the increase in misleading claims circulating in print and online, the underlying science is consistent and robust. Water fluoridation works, it is safe, and it continues to be recommended by health authorities globally, including the World Health Organization, EFSA, and public health agencies in England, Ireland, the United States and beyond.

The British Fluoridation Society and the American Fluoridation Society remain committed to ensuring that the public has access to accurate information about this vital public health measure.

GDC publishes revised Scope of Practice guidance

The General Dental Council (GDC) has published its revised Scope of Practice guidance after a comprehensive review and collaboration with oral healthcare professionals, education providers, indemnifiers, and other key stakeholders.

The updated guidance will take effect on 1 November 2025.

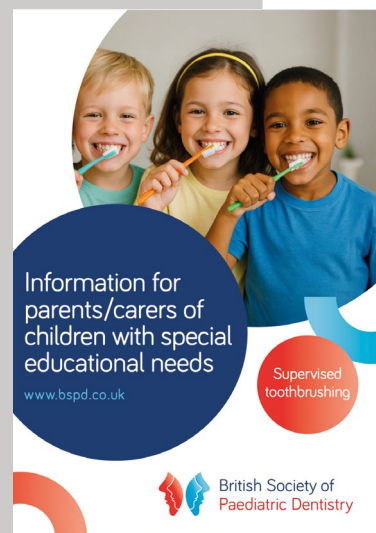
The revised guidance has not changed the scope of practice for any of the seven dental professional titles. Rather, it provides greater clarity on existing title boundaries. The guidance will better support dental professionals to use their professional judgement within these boundaries for the benefit of patients.

The GDC has reminded oral healthcare professionals that having a professional title does not automatically mean they can or should do everything within that title's scope. They must be trained, competent and covered by indemnity or insurance before carrying out any task that falls within their professional title's scope.

Ross Scales, Head of Upstream Regulation at the GDC, said the revised Scope of Practice guidance represents the invaluable contributions from and engagement with the dental sector to date, reflecting the feedback the regulator has received.

'Our aim has been to provide the clarity and support that dental professionals have called for, allowing them to work to their full scope and use their professional judgement to put patients first.

'We are grateful to all those who contributed to this review, and we look forward to supporting the professions in understanding and applying the revised guidance.'



NHS dental statistics show 'encouraging recovery'

There is encouraging recovery and growth in dental services post-COVID-19. That's according to the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) annual 2024/25 NHS Dental Statistics for England report.

The report, which covers 2019/20 to 2024/25 NHS dental activity and workforce data, reveals that 35 million courses of treatment (COTs) were delivered in 2024/25, a 4% increase from the previous year. Child patient treatments (aged under 18) saw particularly strong growth, with COTs increasing by 7% to 12 million. Adult

patient treatments also rose by 2% to 23 million COTs.

The dental workforce continued to expand, with 24,543 dentists providing NHS services in England – a 1.4% increase from 2023/24. This represents 42 dentists per 100,000 population, maintaining the same national ratio as the previous year. A further 73 million units of dental activity (UDAs) were delivered, with Band 1 treatments accounting for 29% of UDAs. The full report is available at: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/statistical-collections/dental-england/dental-statistics-england-202425>.