



Statement by the American Fluoridation Society About the February 1, 2016 Dr. Oz Show

Better health and better TV ratings don't always go hand in hand. A good example is Monday's edition of "The Dr. Oz Show." Dr. Oz interviewed environmental activist Erin Brockovich about her negative views of fluoride. Numerous statements made by Ms. Brockovich presented the public with a misleading or incomplete understanding of community water fluoridation (CWF). This is one more chapter in a long saga of Dr. Mehmet Oz making claims—or inviting guests who make claims—that are not supported by the scientific evidence.

Ms. Brockovich may be sincere, but she is sincerely misguided. She is not an expert in epidemiology, hydrology or other relevant scientific fields. Her lack of knowledge was reflected in the comments that she made on Dr. Oz's show. Dr. Oz himself made two statements about CWF that were either wrong or misleading (*see below for details*).

The evidence [shows](#) that drinking fluoridated water reduces tooth decay by 25% for children and adults. In addition, the overwhelming weight of the evidence shows CWF is safe. For example, in [a 2015 report](#), the Water Research Foundation reviewed nine common concerns that critics raise and concluded that "a balance of scientific studies showed that none of these issues poses a risk to public health at CWF levels."

The leading health, dental and medical [organizations](#) recommend drinking fluoridated water. These organizations include the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dental Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Institute of Medicine and the Mayo Clinic. In fact, the CDC has [praised](#) CWF as one of the 10 "great public health achievements of the 20th century."

It's reasonable to assume that Dr. Oz was aware of Ms. Brockovich's lack of scientific credentials and that she intended to attack CWF. Yet he gave her a public platform to reach millions of Americans with messages that could encourage them to adopt unhealthy behaviors—namely, ceasing their consumption of fluoridated water. This was very irresponsible.

Dr. Oz's show has a disturbing pattern of promoting or sharing views about health that are not supported by solid evidence. A peer-reviewed study [found](#) that 54% of the health advice given on "The Dr. Oz Show" either lacked supporting evidence or directly contradicted the best available evidence. It's time for Dr. Oz to start sharing the most accurate information with his viewers. Calling fluoride a "controversial chemical" may help his ratings, but it won't help the dental health of children and adults.

False or Misleading Statements Made on Dr. Oz's Feb. 1st Show

- Dr. Oz's TV show displayed a screen showing the current and former recommended levels of fluoride for water fluoridation. The current level (0.7 mg/L) was correct, but the former level displayed by the show was incorrect. The previous level was a *range* of 0.7 to 1.2 mg/L—not a single level of 1.2 mg/L.
- Dr. Oz told his audience that "much of Europe has rejected" fluoridation without clarifying that nearly all European countries fund or encourage population-level programs that provide people with fluoride's benefits through fluoridated salt, fluoridated water, fluoridated milk and/or school-based fluoride programs.