

Fluoride Referendum

Questions & Answers



**New Richmond
Utilities** | SINCE 1890

When is the election?

- The Spring Election is Tuesday, April 7, 2026. Eligible voters in the City of New Richmond will have an opportunity to determine whether the City should continue its practice of fluoridating the municipal water supply.

What language will appear on the ballot?

- Voters will be asked the following question: Shall the City of New Richmond continue to fluoridate the municipal water supply?

What does a “yes” vote or “no” vote mean?

- A “yes” vote means that you support the City of New Richmond continuing with its current practice of fluoridating the municipal water supply. A “no” vote means that you do not support the City of New Richmond’s current practice of fluoridating the municipal water supply and desire for this practice to be discontinued.

Is this a binding or advisory referendum? What’s the difference?

- This is a binding referendum, which means that through a majority vote, the local voters will determine whether the City will continue its practice of fluoridating the municipal water supply. This is different than an advisory referendum, which gauges public opinion on a particular issue, but does not require any action to be taken by elected officials.

What will be on the ballot, in addition to the referendum?

- Voters can find out what will be on the ballot by entering their address on the following website: <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Whats-On-My-Ballot>

Who do I contact with questions about voting in the City of New Richmond?

- You may contact the City Clerk, Michelle Scanlan, at mscanlan@newrichmondwi.gov or 715-243-0403. Another great resource is the My Vote Wisconsin website: <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>.

What is fluoride?

- Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in groundwater and many foods.

Why do some municipalities choose to fluoridate the municipal water supply?

- Fluoride is added to public water systems for the promotion of dental health.

Why do some municipalities choose not to fluoridate the municipal water supply?

- Water fluoridation is decided on a local level by each community. Some communities do not fluoridate the municipal water supply from a perspective that individuals should have the right to choose and manage their intake of fluoride, as well as concerns over potential health risks, among other reasons.

What do some surrounding communities do when it comes to fluoride?

- Hudson, Glenwood City, Osceola, Ellsworth, Prescott, and River Falls fluoridate their municipal water supplies, while the communities of Amery, Balsam Lake, Baldwin, Clear Lake, St. Croix Falls, Hammond, Roberts, Somerset, and Star Prairie do not fluoridate their municipal water supplies.

Does the City of New Richmond currently fluoridate the municipal water supply?

- Yes, fluoride has been added to New Richmond’s municipal water supply for over 30 years.

Does fluoride impact the taste, smell, or color of water?

- Fluoride does not noticeably impact the taste, smell, or appearance of water.

What is the annual operating expense of fluoridating the municipal water supply?

- New Richmond Utilities spends approximately \$25,000 per year to add fluoride to the municipal water supply, not including capital equipment costs.

Are there any future capital expenses on the horizon if the City of New Richmond continues to fluoridate the municipal water supply?

- Some of the City’s facilities do not meet current standards for the storage of fluoride, which poses a safety concern to operators due to the risk of combustion if fluoride is mixed with other chemicals. The City’s facilities are currently “grandfathered in”. The cost of remodeling the facilities to meet current standards would likely cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, although approximate construction costs have not been obtained. The removal of fluoride would remove the associated risk and potential future costs of bringing the facilities into compliance.

How are fluoride levels in the municipal water supply monitored for safety?

- New Richmond Utilities staff monitor the fluoride level in the municipal water supply daily. The fluoridation process is regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) through monitoring requirements and inspections.

How much fluoride does the City of New Richmond add to its municipal water supply? What is the recommended level?

- For optimal dental health, the Wisconsin Department of Health recommends fluoride concentrations of 0.6 to 0.8 mg/L. Fluoride samples from New Richmond’s water supply consistently show concentrations are within this recommended range.

Is there any fluoride found naturally in the municipal water supply?

- Fluoride occurs naturally in groundwater, and the average concentration of natural fluoride in the City’s wells is about 0.1 mg/L.

Have any local public health professionals publicly weighed in on this topic?

- HealthPartners, Westfields Hospital & Clinic, St. Croix County Public Health, Wisconsin Academy of General Dentistry, Wisconsin Dental Hygienists’ Association, Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition, and Wisconsin Dental Association have publicly expressed support for water fluoridation.