

Saint John considers FLUORIDE DELIVERY METHODS

In the wake of the Saint John, New Brunswick, city council decision in March 2014 to remove fluoride from municipal drinking water, the New Brunswick Dental Society (NBDS) is pursuing alternative ways to deliver fluoride to the city's residents.

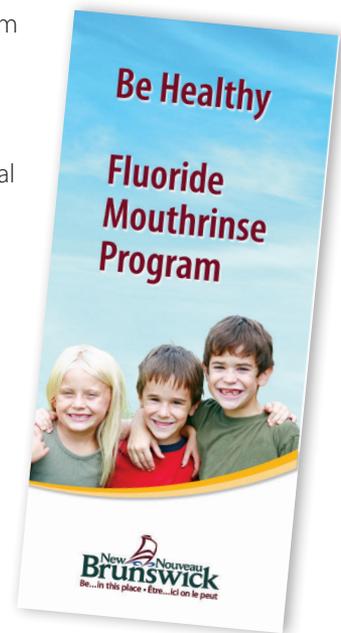


Dr. Kelly Manning

Preventing tooth decay is especially important for the city's most vulnerable residents says Dr. Kelly Manning, president of NBDS and a Saint John-area dentist. "Our biggest challenge, I think, is to reach preschool-aged children and the elderly."

Through its work on a committee of Vibrant Communities Saint John, an organization that supports local poverty-reduction efforts, NBDS is raising awareness of a fluoride rinse program provided in elementary schools. The program has been available to children in kindergarten to grade five for some time, but has experienced poor uptake in recent years.

"The benefit of this fluoride rinse program is that it has the potential to reach people who choose not to drink municipal water, regardless of whether it's fluoridated or not. They're choosing bottled water or use well water. Even with fluoridated drinking water, there's always a segment of the population that we're missing," says Dr. Manning.



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The NBDS also had the opportunity to discuss the benefits of fluoridated drinking water with a Saint John city councillor who sits on the Vibrant Communities committee, "since we didn't have a chance to have that conversation before council made their decision to remove fluoride," explains Dr. Manning. "I'm ever hopeful that the council will re-implement water fluoridation because I think it's the most equitable way of getting fluoride to those vulnerable populations." ❖