

Dear City Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in front of you today. My name is Dr. Michelle Jung, and I am a rheumatologist. You may be wondering why a rheumatologist cares about fluoridation of water.

Patients with rheumatologic conditions are at risk of dental caries. Poor dental health in combination with immune compromise can lead to life-threatening infections. For example, patients with Sjogren syndrome often suffer from progressive and severe tooth decay because they cannot produce enough saliva. I also treat patients with various types of inflammatory arthritis, which can lead to the loss of joint mobility and prevent people from performing simple activities of daily living such as brushing their teeth.

During my training in medical school and residency, I have cared for many elderly patients with dementia. I witnessed how many of them suffered silently because they could not brush their teeth or forgot to brush their teeth or forgot to inform someone that they were in pain from dental caries.

Most importantly, I am here today because I am a mother of two young children, and I am very concerned about their oral health. I am fortunate that I can afford dental care. I cannot imagine the stress of parents with lower-income struggling to take their children to dentists when they are already struggling to make their ends meet. As a mother of young children, I am interested in their development and success. Extensive dental decay in children is painful and can impair eating, sleeping, playing and proper development. These children may require dental surgery and exposure to general anesthetic, which may impact brain development.

My colleagues who are family physicians, pediatricians, emergency medicine physicians, infectious disease specialist, and specialists in other fields of medicine can attest to the increased rate of cavities in children following the loss of water fluoridation:

I believe that fluoridation of water benefits everyone in the community. Despite the budgetary challenges faced by the city council, I believe that fluoridation of water is a good investment into the health of Calgarians that you represent.

Sincerely,



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