



**American Water Works  
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## Utility Member Benefit

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The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water<sup>®</sup>

## Public Affairs Advisory

**TO: AWWA Section Public Affairs Contacts  
All Utilities**

**FROM: AWWA Government Affairs Office**

**DATE: August 1st, 2011**

<b>What:</b>	<b>No Link Found Between Fluoride and Osteosarcoma</b>
<b>Who:</b>	<b>International Association for Dental Research</b>
<b>When:</b>	<b>Study Findings Announced Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup>.</b>

The International Association for Dental Research (IADR) has released a new study that found no link between fluoride and osteosarcoma, a rare form of cancerous bone tumors. In 2006, the National Research Council (NRC) concluded that this study would be the definitive study about this connection. This study adds to the body of evidence that water fluoridation is a safe public health strategy for utilities, and may result in some activity from anti-fluoride activists.

Unlike previous studies, this research used actual bone fluoride concentrations, a more sound and reliable way to assess fluoride exposure. According to IADR, this represents the best science to date and shows no association between fluoride in bone and osteosarcoma risk.

The root causes of osteosarcoma remain unknown, and research is ongoing. However, this research represents the authoritative voice on the absent connection between fluoride and osteosarcoma.

IADR's press release for this study can be found here:

[http://www.iadr.org/files/public/JDRNewsRelease\\_Osteosarcoma.pdf](http://www.iadr.org/files/public/JDRNewsRelease_Osteosarcoma.pdf)

For more information on osteosarcoma, look here:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0002616/>

The NRC report, *Fluoride in Drinking Water: A Scientific Review of EPA's Standards*, can be found at [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=11571](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=11571).

In March 2010, and as part of the second [Six Year Review](#), USEPA indicated that the Office of Water was in the process of developing its health and exposure assessments to address the NRC's recommendations. The Agency finalized the [risk and exposure assessments for fluoride](#) in January 2011 and announced its intent to review the drinking water regulations for fluoride to

determine whether revisions are appropriate. More information on USEPA's fluoride activities can be found at <http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/basicinformation/fluoride.cfm>.

Talking points, prepared by the Pew Center on the States, are included below. For additional information, please contact Alan Roberson in the Government Affairs office at [aroberson@awwa.org](mailto:aroberson@awwa.org) or 202-628-8303.

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### **Suggested Talking Points for the Harvard-Douglass Study from the Pew Center on the States**

- This study of human exposure to fluoride shows no correlation between fluoride and osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer. This study improves our understanding and adds to the considerable body of evidence that fluoridated water is a safe, public health strategy.
- In its 2006 report on fluoride, the National Research Council noted that if fluoride *might* be linked to cancer, osteosarcoma was the most plausible type of cancer because fluoride tends to concentrate in human bone. The fact that this study shows no such link means Americans can feel more confident that fluoride does not cause any form of cancer.
- In its 2006 report, the National Research Council pointed out that earlier studies of possible links between fluoride and cancer are unreliable because “populations rather than individuals are the unit of observation.” By contrast, this newly released Harvard study was based on individuals’ fluoride exposure. The researchers based their analysis on bone fluoride levels, which is a much more sound and reliable way to assess fluoride exposure from *all* sources.
- This is a thorough, impressive and credible study. The researchers analyzed hundreds of bone specimens for fluoride content. The study design was approved by the National Cancer Institute and was funded by three divisions of the National Institutes of Health. It reflects the strong commitment of our nation’s premier research institution to answer an important question.
- Osteosarcoma is a very rare bone cancer, and the cause remains unknown. It is important that scientists continue to explore possible causes of this disease. We hope that fluoridation opponents will stop confusing families that are dealing with this serious diagnosis by making claims that are based on their agenda to stop fluoridation—not based on a genuine concern to prevent this form of cancer.

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