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18 December 2024

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2024056822

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your follow up request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 20 November 2024 for information about community water fluoridation. You requested:

“In reply to your response: does this mean that the ministry of health thinks that it is acceptable to lower the IQ of a child exposed to fluoride in utero or via baby formula by 5-9 points?”

In 2014, a comprehensive report was published by the Royal Society Te Apārangi, prepared jointly with the Office of the Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor, reviewing the substantial body of scientific evidence on the efficacy and safety of fluoridation of public water supplies. The report concluded that there are no adverse health effects of any significance from fluoridation levels used in New Zealand. In June 2021, the Office of the Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor released an evidence update on community water fluoridation. The update confirmed that there are no significant negative health effects caused by fluoride at the recommended levels used in New Zealand, and that the conclusions of the 2014 report remain appropriate. These reviews are publicly available at: www.pmcsa.ac.nz/topics/fluoridation-an-update-on-evidence/.

In 2024, the Ministry of Health carried out a further review of the evidence about the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation published since the Office of the Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor report in 2021. The Ministry’s review concurs with the conclusions of the 2014 and 2021 reviews that community water fluoridation is a safe and effective health intervention to prevent dental caries. This report can be found on the Ministry’s website at: [Community Water Fluoridation: An evidence review | Ministry of Health NZ](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/communities/fluoridation/Community-Water-Fluoridation-An-evidence-review-Ministry-of-Health-NZ).

It is important to note that while the Act allows New Zealanders to ask for information from Ministers and government agencies, there is no requirement for agencies to create new information, compile information they do not hold or provide or prove an opinion. Your questions and the statements that support them appear designed to engage in a debate, rather than a request for official information. The Act does not support requests where an opinion, comment, argument, or hypothetical statement is put to the Ministry for response, couched as a request for information. Your request is therefore refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the

information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing this is more closely connected with the functions of another agency subject to the Act.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Possenniskie', is positioned above the typed name.

Clare Possenniskie
Acting Group Manager, Public Health Policy and Regulation
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui