

An 'Epidemic' of Childhood Tooth Decay in the Fluoridated Republic of Ireland

By [Chemical Concern](#)

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[Background information](#): Ireland, the only country in the European Union with a nationwide mandate for water fluoridation -via the Health (Fluoridation of Water Supplies) Act 1960, which mandated compulsory fluoridation by local authorities. 3,250,000 Irish people receive artificially-fluoridated water.

The agent used is [hydrofluorosilicic acid](#). [Corrosive to most metals](#) it eats through [concrete](#) and Hazmat suits (impermeable whole-body garments must be worn to handle it as a gas may be released which damages the lungs. This and other adverse health effects are listed by [NIOSH](#) (US government agency).

A [private member's bill](#) to end fluoridation was defeated in the Dáil on 12 November 2013. It was supported by Sinn Féin and some of the technical group and opposed by the Fine Gael-Labour government and Fianna Fáil.

Early in 2014, Cork County Council and Laois County Council passed motions for the cessation of water fluoridation. In Autumn 2014, Cork City Council, Dublin City Council and Kerry County Council passed similar motions.

Today, Aaron Rogan in [The Times](#) reports that a study by University College Cork published in this month's [Journal of the Irish Dental Association](#) found that 60% of the 347 Irish children who required dental treatment under general anaesthetic before they turned five needed teeth extracted.

Michaela Dalton, president of the HSE dental surgeons group describes it as an 'epidemic of tooth decay'. "Juices and yoghurts are rotting babies' teeth but are being sold as replacements for fruit. Sugary cereal bars are sold as healthy snacks. They're labelled as no-added sugar and all-natural but they have concentrated fruit sugars, which are really acidic and rotting teeth" Dr Dalton said.

Another significant finding was that despite a long-established link between economic disadvantage and dental problems, there was no significant class difference for preschool children requiring treatment under general anaesthetic.

"Disadvantaged children have a higher risk of requiring a dental general anaesthesia in their lifetime; however, this is not occurring in isolation, with their equivalents in the higher social group also placing a strain on the system," the study said.

The programme for government explicitly mentioned that preschool oral health intervention

would save the taxpayer money – but the expensive water fluoridation programme already compulsory in Ireland is universally ‘sold’ as an oral health intervention.

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