

A Mere 27% of Brazilians Have Fluoridated Water

Contributed by Rosamélia de Abreu
Monday, 13 June 2005

Only 50 million people in Brazil from a population of 184 million, have access to fluoridated public water supplies. Fluoridated water is important, because it halves the incidence of dental caries in children and adolescents.

The Ministry of Health plans to invest US\$ 6 million (15 million reais) this year to double the number of Brazilians with access to fluoridated water.

According to the national Oral Health coordinator of the Ministry's Smiling Brazil Program, Gilberto Pucca, this measure will have a big impact on the health of the population.

"It is a highly effective measure, mainly in relation to the prevention of dental caries, which is Brazil's principal public health problem. Cities with fluoridated water reduce the incidence of dental caries in the population by 50%."

Pucca said that the investment is small, compared with the benefit. "It is an inexpensive measure, because the addition of fluor to the public water supply has an annual cost US\$ 0.40 (1 real) per inhabitant," he pointed out.

The funds will be used to install 500 fluoridation systems by the end of the year. Last year 250 cities received this benefit.

Agência Brasil