



Adding Fluoride to the Lethbridge Tap Water







Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2011

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Methodology

-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 86,659 residents (2010 municipal census) approximately 80% of which are 18 years of age or older (69,327). A total of 42,373 Lethbridge residents are male (48.9%) while 44,286 are female (51.1%). South Lethbridge is home to 30,144 residents (34.8%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 31,399 residents (36.2%). There are 25,116 north Lethbridge residents (29.0%). Coaldale has a total population of 6,943 residents (2009 Census).
-  **Sample Data** were collected by Lethbridge College and Athabasca University students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods in the winter of 2011. Students interviewed 771 randomly selected, adult Lethbridge and Coaldale residents by telephone on February 12–13, 2011 under the supervision of School of Liberal Arts faculty members Faron Ellis, PhD and Marda Schindeler, MA. Telephone numbers were selected from a sample drawn from InfoCanada directories. We sincerely appreciate and thank all those who took time to respond to our survey. Full methodological notes for samples from previous Lethbridge and Alberta Public Opinion Studies can be obtained by visiting the CSRL web pages at: www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/go/csrl
-  **Representativeness** Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the city of Lethbridge. The sample has been statistically weighted where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender, age and area of the city of Lethbridge).
-  **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error of ± 3.51 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data. For example, the Lethbridge subsample margin of error is ± 3.77 percentage points, 19 times out of 20; ± 9.52 percentage points for the Coaldale subsample, and ± 5.3 percentage points for each of the Lethbridge provincial electoral divisions.
-  **IB Commons Call Centre** Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre and applications developed by the Open Source Learning Lab. We thank Dr. James Manis and the OSL for their efforts in working with us to establish and maintain the IB Commons Call Centre.
-  **Sponsorship** These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at Lethbridge College. This particular set of question was derived from the research interests of College students and faculty.

Adding Fluoride to the Lethbridge Tap Water (%)

When asked to voice their opinions about whether or not the City of Lethbridge should continue to add fluoride to the Lethbridge tap water, as expected, opinion is divided. A plurality of Lethbridge residents (48.7%) would prefer to keep adding fluoride to the Lethbridge drinking water while nearly as many (42.6%) would prefer to stop adding fluoride. The remaining Lethbridge residents (8.7%) were undecided on the issue at the time of data collection.

Conversely, a plurality of Coaldale residents (45.0%) would like to the City of Lethbridge to stop adding fluoride to the tap water it sells to Coaldale. Only 39.5% want the fluoridation program to continue. Fully 15.5% of Coaldale residents are undecided.

Within the city of Lethbridge, west Lethbridge residents are most supportive of continuing with the fluoridation program (51.2%), followed by south Lethbridge residents (48.2%). North Lethbridge residents are evenly split on the issue with 46.4% supportive of fluoridation, exactly the same proportion as those who would like fluoridation stopped.

Men (51.8%) are more supportive of continuing fluoridation than are women (45.9%).

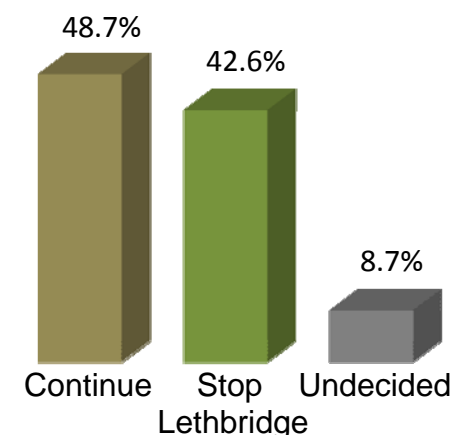
No significant opinion differences emerge with respect to income, education or age. Although boomers are the most supportive of continuing fluoridation (55.8%), while seniors are most opposed (48.9%) and the only age group that is more opposed than supportive (45.2%). Younger Lethbridge residents (youth and gen-x) are more undecided than are middle aged and older residents.

None of the marginal differences within demographic categories are statistically significant.

Adding Fluoride to the Lethbridge Tap Water	All Residents	Coaldale	Lethbridge
Continue to add fluoride	47.9	39.5	48.7
Stop adding fluoride	42.8	45.0	42.6
Undecided	9.2	15.5	8.7

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Note: If respondents stated that the City of Lethbridge should hold a plebiscite on this issue, respondents were asked to indicate how they would vote in such a plebiscite and that response was recorded. Virtually all of the small number of respondents who indicated they wanted a plebiscite told us how they would vote and that preference was recorded.



Adding Fluoride to the Lethbridge Tap Water (%) (Lethbridge residents)

Region	South	North	West	All Lethbridge
Continue to add fluoride	48.2	46.4	51.2	48.7
Stop adding fluoride	43.9	46.4	38.1	42.6
Undecided	7.9	7.1	10.7	8.7

Gender	Male	Female
Continue to add fluoride	51.8	45.9
Stop adding fluoride	39.9	45.0
Undecided	8.3	9.1

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40-\$80,000	Over \$80,000
Continue to add fluoride	49.3	49.0	51.1
Stop adding fluoride	44.3	44.4	39.1
Undecided	6.4	6.6	9.8

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Continue to add fluoride	45.5	50.3	49.4	49.8
Stop adding fluoride	45.5	39.9	45.5	40.0
Undecided	9.1	9.8	5.1	10.2

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Continue to add fluoride	47.9	44.0	55.8	45.2
Stop adding fluoride	39.7	42.6	39.1	48.9
Undecided	12.3	13.5	5.1	5.9

Religious Participation	1-3 per month/more	Several per year	Rarely/never
Continue to add fluoride	48.9	51.0	47.6
Stop adding fluoride	42.4	44.0	42.2
Undecided	8.7	5.0	10.2

Provincial Vote Intention	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Continue to add fluoride	50.6	46.3	66.0	48.5	44.3
Stop adding fluoride	38.2	48.0	28.3	39.7	49.1
Undecided	11.2	5.7	5.7	11.8	6.6

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; * sig < 0.05

Demographics

Gender (%)	
Male	49.1
Female	50.9

Area of City (%)	
South	33.3
North	30.1
West	36.6

Income (%)	
Under \$40,000	35.7
\$40-\$80,000	34.6
Over \$80,000	29.6

Education (%)	
H-School/less	22.9
Some P-Sec.	21.3
Col-Tech-Grad	25.7
University Grad	30.1

Age (%)	
18-29	21.6
30-44	20.6
45-64	30.8
65 or older	27.0

Religious Participation (%)	
2-3/month or more	37.2
Several/year	15.0
Rarely-never	47.9

Question

The City of Lethbridge adds fluoride to the tap water it provides Lethbridge, Coaldale and other southern Alberta communities. Please tell me if you think the City of Lethbridge should continue adding fluoride, or stop adding fluoride to the tap water.

- Continue fluoridation
- Stop fluoridation
- (have a plebiscite) (ask and record how respondent would vote in a plebiscite) (unprompted)
- (don't know) (unprompted)
- (Refused) (unprompted)