

# Fluoride

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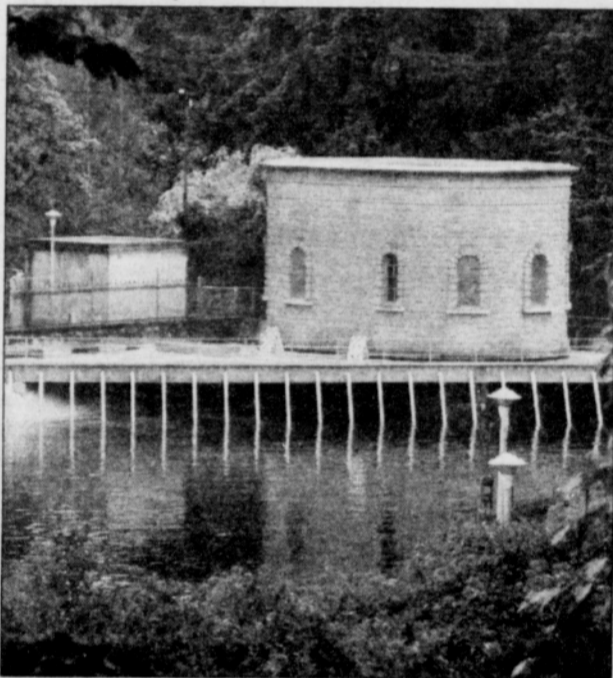
saw a dentist at age 17.

She said without individual and daily dose amounts based on their body weight, those who consume fluoridated water, especially babies and children whose kidneys are underdeveloped, are at risk of toxicity.

African-American babies, she said, are more likely to be fed formula with fluoridated water. African Americans also have the highest rates of kidney disease associated with other diseases like diabetes and hypertension, she said.

Whyte also argues that once fluoride is swallowed, those who consume it are at risk of systemic side effects such as dental fluorosis, a discoloration of tooth enamel, and skeletal fluorosis, which can result in any degree of arthritis or osteoporosis.

Instead of fluoridation, Whyte suggests reducing consumption of sugar and starchy food products, which she attributed as rea-



The historic Washington Park Reservoir in southwest Portland is one of the city's storage sites for drinking water.

sons to her poor dental health as a teenager.

To strengthen teeth and bones, she suggests multivitamins like Vitamin D, calcium, magnesium, as well as a healthy dose of exercise.

For more information on the topic, Whyte also recommends reading *Fluoride in Drinking Water: A Scientific Review of EPA's Standards* published in 2006 by the National Research Council.

Urban League's Alexander also grew up in New York with fluoridated water from which he said both he and his children benefited from. He points to the statistics showing much lower dental decay among communities with fluoridation compared to those without.

He said data shows that poorer children suffer from dental decay at twice the rate of children just one zip code away in Beaverton or Vancouver who drink fluoridated water.

"Those are the numbers, but at the base of numbers are children and adults, who are suffering in pain," he said. "Poor dental health follows you through life."

"When I see statistics about the number of children with rampant decay—that's more than 7 cavities, I am appalled because that is not my experience in any of the communities that I or any of my children have experienced," said Alexander.

He recommends for those still undecided to ask folks in the healthcare profession who they trust—doctors, dentists, medical social

workers, the school nurse—if they believe adding fluoride to the water is a safe and useful step.

According to the Healthy Kids Healthy Portland "Yes on 26-151" campaign, the city measure to fluoridate water, there is more than 80 local organizations that support fluo-

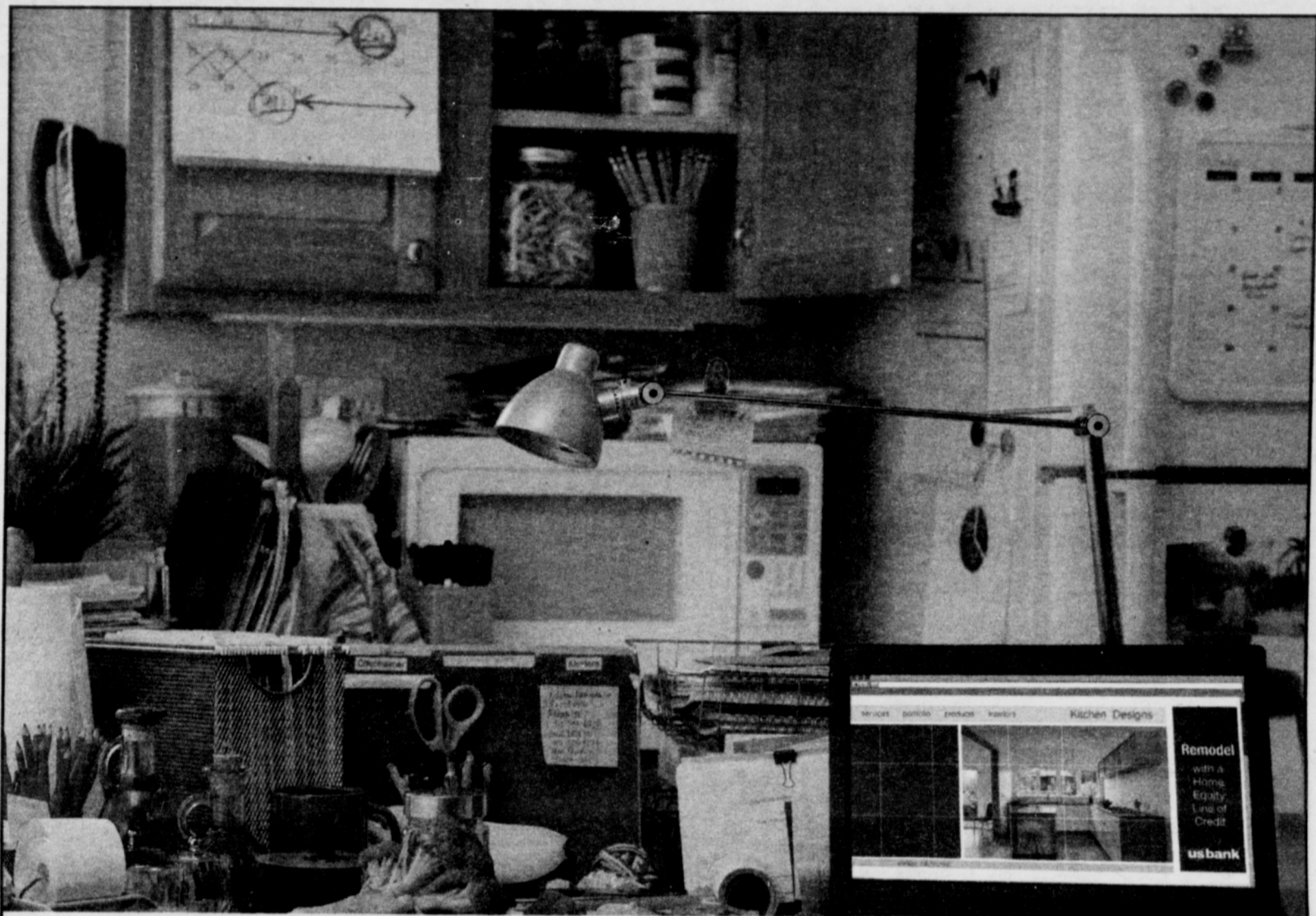
ridating our water, a majority of which are health organizations.

This is not the first time Portlanders have been presented the issue. Voters twice rejected fluoridation before approving it in 1978.

Although Portland City Council mem-

bers unanimously approved a water fluoridation plan earlier this year, opponents were able to gather more than 30,000 signatures from the public, leading to a referendum.

Portland is the largest city in the nation that does not fluoridate its water.



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