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- **DATE:** SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25, 8:30-4:30 (8:15 am doors open)
- **COST:** \$60 per couple (includes material)
- **LOCATION:** Georgetown Alliance Church

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For Couples Wanting More For Their Relationship

Local councillors support fluoridation

Continued from pg. 11

A random telephone survey done by the Region shows 64 per cent of adults said they supported fluoridation.

"I truly believe that if you decide to stop water fluoridation then you are guaranteeing a minimum of 100,000 extra cavities for Halton residents over the next six to 10 years."

But several councillors said adding fluoride to the municipal water system doesn't leave much of choice for residents who are against the practice.

"We don't have a moral right to impose this on our residents," said Oakville Councillor Jeff Knoll. "We are eroding a human right, to have the right to choose."

Oakville Councillor Alan Elgar said he was more concerned with the connection between fluoridated water and hip fractures than its benefits for oral health. "In Europe, 98 per cent of the population doesn't have fluoride in the water, and their dental cavity rate is down to two. It makes me wonder if it was really the fluoride that made the difference."

The passionate delegations from both sides of the debate had councillors admitting they were going back and forth on how to vote throughout the meeting. Halton Hills Councillor Clark Somerville, who originally motioned to end fluoridation in 2008, surprised his colleagues by voting in support of the staff recommendation to continue fluoridating.

"That's not the answer I would have given you five hours ago. But for the overall health and well-being of the region, the smartest thing for me as a councillor is to vote that way," said Somerville. "That's what's best for the most vulnerable citizens"

On Wednesday Somerville said after

hearing the debate he asked himself how he could now vote to stop fluoridation because it would impact "the most vulnerable in our community."

"The disadvantaged who may not be able to afford dental care and the basic necessities of life, they would be the most hurt by removing fluoride," said Somerville.

"One thing that was emphasized was the importance of dental health and how it can affect the rest of your health," said Councillor Jane Fogal. "We can't overlook the role of public health in addressing dental health care."

Fogal said 90 professional organizations are endorsing fluoride as a safe and effective means of preventing cavities.

Mayor Rick Bonnette said after hearing from all the expert delegations speaking in support of fluoridation such as Dr. Cooney and Dr. King, "it gave me a comfort level to keep it in."

He also said by having it in the water, access to fluoride is "equal to everybody" no matter if they're rich or poor.

While the vote was close, there was one thing the majority of councillors agreed upon: this shouldn't be a decision made by municipal politicians.

"This is a public health issue and should be in the jurisdiction of the provincial and federal government," said Burlington Councillor John Taylor. "I have a chemistry background, but I'm still not a doctor, I'm not a dentist, I have to rely on that kind of interpretation from them."

When asked by Halton councillors why the upper levels of government don't mandate water fluoridation since it's so highly recommended by dozens of national and international health organizations, none of the experts could answer.

—With files from Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

How they voted

To continue fluoridation:

Regional Chair Gary Carr, mayors Rick Bonnette (Halton Hills), Rick Goldring (Burlington) and Rob Burton (Oakville) and councillors Tom Adams, Keith Bird, Rick Craven, Jack Dennison, Jane Fogal, Clark Somerville and John Taylor.

To end fluoridation:

Councillors Colin Best, Allan Elgar, Alan Johnston, Jeff Knoll, Tony Lambert, Blair Lancaster, Marianne Meed Ward, Paul Sharman and Milton Mayor Gord Krantz

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