

Fluoride problem not a concern: Nolan

Gail Martin
Weekender Editor

Region of Waterloo's medical officer of health says that residents of Elmira and St. Jacobs should not be overly concerned about the fact that their water has not been fluoridated for the past six months.

Dr. Liana Nolan made the disclosure at a public meeting last week, telling regional councillors

that "mechanical failure" with the fluoridation system has meant that Waterloo, Elmira and St. Jacobs has not had fluoridated water since April 2009.

The system should be repaired by the end of this year.

Nolan told the Independent that the benefits of fluoride in water, which is used to lower the incidence of cavities, is a "cumulative" effect, over a long period of time.

She added that if fluoridation is

discontinued, studies show an increase of 18 per cent in the incidence of cavities, over a six to 10-year period.

A period of six to eight months is of less concern, said Nolan.

"Over the short term, it's not something to be concerned about," said Nolan. "There is nothing that individuals have to do."

Nolan said that the region is obligated to inform the public when the levels of fluoride drop to less

than 0.5 ppm for more than 90 days, which is what occurred in this instance.

The debate over whether to continue the practice of adding fluoride to water in Waterloo will be settled in a referendum next November. Elmira and St. Jacobs get their municipal water from Waterloo.