

What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and to help stop cavities that have already started. The paint-on fluoride varnish is sticky, so it attaches to the teeth easily and makes the outer layer (enamel) of the teeth harder, helping to prevent cavities.

Why is fluoride varnish recommended for children's teeth?

Tooth decay is one of the most common preventable diseases seen in children. Children as young as 12 to 18 months can get cavities. Cavities in children's teeth can cause pain and prevent children from eating, speaking, sleeping and learning.

Does my child need fluoride varnish?

Children who are at risk for dental decay or who do not live in communities with fluoridated water benefit from the application of fluoride varnish to their teeth to help stop or prevent decay.

At what age should fluoride varnish be applied?

Fluoride varnish is recommended for children of all ages, including infants.



How is fluoride varnish applied to the teeth?

The fluoride varnish is easily painted on the teeth with a small disposable brush. It is quick, painless and does not have a bad taste.



How long does fluoride varnish last?

The fluoride varnish sticks to the teeth until it is brushed away the next day; however, the benefits of the fluoride will last for several months. Fluoride varnish needs to be reapplied every three to four months for best results.

Is fluoride varnish safe?

Yes, fluoride varnish can be used on babies from the time they have their first teeth. Only a very small amount of fluoride varnish is used.

Who will provide this service?

A trained Public Health Nurse will apply the fluoride varnish to your child's teeth. This is a Medicaid approved procedure.

What should parents do after fluoride varnish is applied to a child's teeth?

- *Do not brush or floss* your child's teeth until the next day.
- Don't allow your child to eat hard or chewy foods or chew gum on the treatment day. This might chip off the varnish.



- Do not give your child a fluoride supplement on the treatment day.
- The fluoride varnish can be yellow or clear. If the teeth appear yellow for 24 hours, this is normal. This yellow color will disappear when the teeth are brushed the next day.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease found in children.

***Good news!
It is preventable!***

Taking care of children's teeth, including baby teeth, as soon as they first appear is the key!

Early Childhood Decay



Millions of school hours are lost each year due to dental related illness.

Early tooth loss and dental decay can result in:

- Impaired Speech Development
- Inability to concentrate in school
- Loss of self esteem
- Damage to permanent teeth



TIPS to prevent tooth decay in children

- Wipe baby's gums with a wet cloth after feeding even before baby's teeth appear.
- Do not put baby to bed with a bottle. If you have to, make sure it is only filled with water.
- Brush twice a day for at least two minutes with toothpaste that has fluoride.
- Take children to the dentist by their first birthday.
- Visit the dentist regularly.
- Give children healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid sharing toothbrushes, eating utensils or cups.

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Fluoride Varnish



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