

FLUORIDE FACTS FOR FAMILIES

DENTAL HEALTH IS PART OF YOUR CHILD'S OVERALL HEALTH!



WHAT IS FLUORIDE?

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in soil, water, and air. Fluoride is often added to drinking water, toothpaste and mouth rinses because of its ability to prevent tooth decay and strengthen teeth.

HOW DOES FLUORIDE PROTECT TEETH?

We all have bacteria in our mouths. When we eat or drink, the sugars from our food and beverages come in contact with those bacteria and cause acid that can damage our teeth. Fluoride acts like a shield against that acid –protecting the enamel of the tooth and even helping to rebuild enamel when necessary.



WHY IS FLUORIDE IMPORTANT FOR KIDS?

The enamel on baby teeth is thinner and softer, which makes them more susceptible to decay. Tooth decay can be very painful and distracting, and can even cause baby teeth to fall out prematurely, leading adult teeth to grow in incorrectly. Decay in baby teeth can also spread to developing adult teeth, and if untreated, can cause infection, endangering the child's health.

To prevent tooth decay, make sure your child gets plenty of fluoride.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

Too much fluoride before age 8 can lead to dental fluorosis in children. Dental fluorosis causes faint, white specs on the teeth. Dental fluorosis does not cause pain, and it does not harm the teeth or the child's health.

Dental fluorosis can usually be avoided by ensuring that children don't swallow toothpaste after brushing! Swallowing a lot of toothpaste can make kids ill.



BENEFITS OF FLUORIDE:

- Strengthens and repairs enamel
- Reduces risk of early tooth decay
- Keeps cavity-causing bacteria from growing
- Prevents pain, infection, and tooth loss from decay that can cause issues eating, speaking, sleeping and learning
- Avoids invasive and costly procedures to repair tooth decay damage



IS FLUORIDE SAFE FOR MY CHILD? DOES IT WORK?

The American Academy of Pediatrics, and several other credible institutions agree that fluoride is very safe for babies and children. In addition, comparisons of communities with fluoridated and non-fluoridated water show that fluoride is effective at preventing tooth decay.

FLUORIDE OPTIONS

Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF)

- SDF is a liquid medication applied by brush to a cavity by a trained professional
- SDF contains silver which kills germs that cause tooth decay, and fluoride which can prevent, slow, or stop decay
- SDF can prevent the need for more invasive treatments, like drilling and filling a tooth

Fluoridated Water

- Many communities add safe amounts of fluoride to community drinking water
- Studies show fluoridated water can reduce tooth decay by 25% in kids and adults

Fluoride Varnish

- Sticky substance containing fluoride that coats the teeth
- Can reduce tooth decay by 33% in baby teeth & 46% in adult teeth
- Professionally applied by a dentist or pediatrician

Fluoride Toothpaste

- Brushing with fluoride toothpaste can reduce the chance of tooth decay by up to 25%
- Brush teeth at least twice a day
- Make sure children spit out excess toothpaste

Fluoride Rinse

- It is recommended that children 6 years and older “swish and spit” fluoride rinses
- Fluoride rinses can be prescribed or purchased over the counter