

# Fluoride Varnish Protects Teeth

## What is Fluoride Varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is applied on teeth to prevent decay or on teeth with early signs of decay. Fluoride can slow down or help stop cavities from getting bigger. This does not replace regular dental checkups at your dental office as your child may still need dental treatment.

The fluoride varnish will be applied on your child's teeth up to two times each year. The number of times depends on your child's risk for decay.

## How is Fluoride Varnish Put On?

Your child's teeth are dried with gauze and then a small amount of varnish is painted onto their teeth using a small disposable brush. Once applied the varnish sets quickly to either a white or yellow-orange colour. The process only takes a few seconds.

## After Fluoride Varnish is Painted On

Your child's teeth may have a yellow/orange or cloudy appearance after the varnish is applied. Your child may tell you that their teeth feel rough or sticky, which is normal. Both the colour and roughness will go away after their nighttime tooth brushing.

After the fluoride varnish is painted on, your child can have a drink of water at any time. For the rest of the day your child should:

- eat only soft foods;
- avoid dry, crunchy and sticky foods to prevent the varnish from being scraped off too soon. (e.g. crackers, fruit rollups, toffee, gum);
- avoid hot foods and beverages (e.g. soup, tea, coffee, hot chocolate); and
- not brush or floss the teeth until that evening.

## Is Fluoride Varnish Safe?

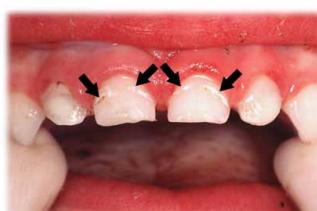
Yes. Fluoride varnish has been proven to be safe on children and adults of all ages. Along with being safe, fluoride is an inexpensive and practical way to reduce tooth decay.

## Protect Your Child's Smile!

Teeth are important! Healthy teeth help your child chew properly, speak clearly and smile brightly. To keep teeth healthy:

- limit sweet snacks to mealtimes
- floss and brush daily
- visit the dentist once a year

If you have questions about your child's teeth, visit your dental office or call an oral health professional in your health region.



Find areas that need fluoride varnish.



Dry teeth with a gauze.



Paint fluoride varnish on teeth.

Photos courtesy of the University of Iowa, Department of Pediatric Dentistry

August 2016 DH 112