

## Things to Remember!

- **Care don't share.** Don't share utensils with your child or "clean" a pacifier by putting it in your mouth. You can transfer cavity causing germs to your child.
- **Brush 2 times a day** for 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste.
- **Floss** once a day.
- **Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet** with limited snacks.
- **Avoid sugary foods** including soda and juices. Drink lots of water.
- **Your child's first dental visit** should be no later than one year of age. Visit the dentist regularly.
- **Seal out decay.** Ask your dentist about applying dental sealants to chewing surfaces of teeth.



For additional information on our next Fluoride Varnish Clinic or assistance in finding a dental home please contact:

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# FLUORIDE VARNISH

What Parents Need to Know



Healthy gums and teeth are important to your child's overall health. This is why your child's doctor/dentist will talk with you about good dental habits even before your child's first tooth appears.

Once your child has a tooth, your doctor/dentist may recommend that your child receive fluoride varnish treatments to help prevent tooth decay. This can be done 2 to 4 times per year. The number of treatments depends on how likely it is that your child may get a cavity.

Fluoride varnish may be applied in a dental office, doctor's office, or at your local health district.

### What is Fluoride Varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a dental treatment that can help prevent tooth decay, slow it down, or stop it from getting worse. Fluoride varnish is made with fluoride, a mineral that can strengthen tooth enamel (outer coating on teeth).

Keep in mind that fluoride varnish treatments cannot completely prevent

cavities. Fluoride varnish treatments can best help prevent decay when a child is also brushing using the right amount of toothpaste with fluoride, flossing regularly, getting regular dental care, and eating a healthy diet.

### Is Fluoride Varnish Safe?

Fluoride varnish is safe and used by dentists and doctors all over the world to help prevent tooth decay in children. Only a small amount is used, and hardly any fluoride is swallowed. It is quickly applied and hardens. Then it is brushed off after 4 to 12 hours.

### How is Fluoride Varnish Put on the Teeth?

Fluoride varnish is painted on the top and sides of each tooth with a small brush. It is sticky but hardens once it comes in contact with saliva. Your child may feel the hardened sticky varnish with their tongue but will not be able to lick the varnish off.

It does not hurt when the varnish is applied.

However, young children

may still cry before or during the procedure. Fortunately, brushing on the varnish takes only a few minutes. Also, applying the varnish may be easier when a child is crying because his mouth will be slightly open.

### How Do I Care for My Child's Teeth After Fluoride Varnish is Applied?

Here are general guidelines on how to care for your child's teeth after fluoride varnish is applied.

- Your child can eat and drink right after the fluoride varnish is applied. But only give your child soft foods and cold or warm (not hot) foods or liquids.
- Do not brush or floss teeth for at least 4 to 6 hours. Your child's doctor may tell you to wait until the next morning to brush or floss. Remind your child to spit when rinsing, if he knows how to spit.
- Check with your child's doctor/dentist for any other special instructions.

