



## Fluoride Varnish Information for Parents

### What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a coating that is painted on teeth. It helps to prevent new cavities. It can also help stop cavities that have already started.

### Why do we recommend putting fluoride varnish on children's teeth?

Tooth decay is one of the most common diseases seen in children. It can also be prevented. Cavities in baby teeth can cause pain. They can keep children from being able to eat, speak, sleep, and learn properly. Children do not lose all their baby teeth until they are about 11 or 12 years old.



### Is fluoride varnish a new method?

No, it was developed in the 1960's in Europe.

### Is fluoride varnish safe?

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

### How is fluoride varnish put on the teeth?

The varnish is painted on the teeth. It is quick and easy to apply and does not have a bad taste. There is no pain. Your child may cry just because babies and children don't like having things put in their mouths by people they don't know! Your child's teeth may look yellow after the fluoride varnish is painted on. The color will come off the next day when you brush your child's teeth.

### Should my child eat or drink after getting fluoride varnish? What about brushing?

The doctor or dentist will tell you if your child can drink or eat after getting fluoride varnish. The fluoride varnish should stay on the teeth for the rest of the day and overnight. Do not have your child brush his or her teeth the day of the varnish. Have your child brush his or her teeth the day after the varnish treatment. It will come off with brushing.



### How does fluoride varnish work?

Fluoride varnish is sticky so it stays on the teeth longer than other kinds of fluoride treatments. It makes the outside of the teeth harder and helps to prevent decay. Because it slowly soaks into the teeth, varnish is a good way for the tooth to take-in fluoride. Fluoride varnish has been found to reduce decay on tooth surfaces by 50% to 70%.

### How often should my child have fluoride varnish treatments? What about other kinds of fluoride?

Fluoride varnish is recommended at least two times per year. It works from the outside of the teeth, so it doesn't take the place of other kinds of fluoride, such as tablets or drops.

### Remember - baby teeth are important! They:



- Let your child chew food.
- Help in speech development.
- Guide the permanent (adult) teeth into place.
- Help with jaw and facial formation.
- Add to your baby's good health.

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