

Early Dental Health: Fluoride Varnish



Four Steps to Good Oral Health:

1. Once the first tooth appears, brush your baby's teeth twice a day with a smear of fluoride toothpaste on a soft bristle baby tooth brush. This is the best way to prevent cavities.
2. Do not put your child to bed with a bottle. If you must put your child to bed with a bottle, it should contain only water.
3. Talk with your child's doctor or dentist about possible fluoride varnish treatments.
4. Take your baby to the dentist by age 1 for his first dental check up.

Mississippi State Department of Oral Health
http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/41,0,151.html



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North Carolina Department of
Health and Human Services,
Division of Public Health,
Oral Health Section
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What is fluoride varnish?

Why should I consider getting fluoride varnish treatments for my child?

When should my child get fluoride varnish treatments?

What happens during a fluoride varnish application?

Is fluoride varnish safe?

Why is it important to protect the primary (baby) teeth?



**Step by Step to
Early Dental Health**

What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a temporary protective coating that is painted onto your child's teeth to help prevent new cavities and to help stop cavities that have already started. The coating is a sticky layer that attaches to the enamel (surface) of the teeth. When the fluoride varnish is in contact with the tooth enamel it remineralizes the tooth. Remineralizing is when the fluoride is restored to the tooth and strengthens the enamel. Fluoride is the best protection we have to prevent tooth decay.



Why should I consider getting fluoride varnish treatments for my child?

Childhood tooth decay is an easily preventable disease. By taking care of your child's teeth from an early age, you can ensure that he will not experience childhood tooth decay. Fluoride varnish helps to reduce tooth decay for the child at high risk for tooth decay. Fluoride varnish is not necessary for all children. It is recommended for children who do not have access to fluoridated community water and/or those who are at a higher risk of tooth decay. You can check with your child's doctor or dentist to see if he would benefit from fluoride varnish. If the doctor or dentist recommends your child for fluoride varnish treatments, you can schedule an appointment to have the fluoride varnish applied.

When should my child get fluoride varnish treatments?

Once the child's teeth start coming in, check with your child's doctor or dentist to see if they recommend fluoride varnish treatments for your child. For the best cavity protection, a child should receive four to six treatments before the age of 3.

What happens during a fluoride varnish application?

- Your child's teeth are dried with a gauze square to get ready for the fluoride varnish.
- The doctor or dentist will then use a small brush to paint the teeth with the fluoride varnish. Depending on the brand, fluoride varnish can be anywhere from a white color to a yellow color. The application is fast and painless.
- The fluoride varnish stays on the teeth until you brush it off the next day. Your child can eat soft foods and drink normally after a fluoride varnish treatment.
- The next morning, you can brush the fluoride varnish off of your child's teeth and the color will go away. Fluoride treatments are most effective when your child gets them regularly. Check with your doctor about when to bring your child back for the next one.



Is fluoride varnish safe?

Yes, fluoride varnish is most effective when used from the time babies get their first teeth. Only a very small amount of fluoride varnish is used.

Why is it important to protect the primary (baby) teeth?

Primary (baby) teeth are important to your child's development. They help your child to speak correctly and chew their food. They help to guide the permanent (adult) teeth into place. Healthy baby teeth will give your child a beautiful smile. Fluoride varnish is an easy way to protect your child from cavities.

