



## What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a fluoride treatment that is painted on teeth to help prevent cavities and to help stop small cavities that have already started. It is the only type of fluoride treatment the American Dental Association (ADA) recommends for children younger than 6-years-old.



## Why is putting fluoride varnish on children's teeth recommended?

Tooth decay is one of the most common preventable diseases of childhood. Cavities can start to develop as soon as baby teeth come in, usually between 6 months to 1 year of age. Cavities in baby teeth can cause pain and infection and even prevent children from being able to eat, speak, sleep, and learn properly.

## Is fluoride varnish safe?

Yes, fluoride varnish is safe and used by dentists and doctors all over the world. 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 it put on teeth?

The varnish is painted on the teeth, and it sets quickly when saliva touches it. It is quick and easy to apply and does not have a bad taste. There is no pain, but babies and young children may cry because they don't like the overall experience.

## How often should your child get fluoride varnish painted on their teeth?

Fluoride varnish can be applied as soon as the first tooth erupts. The ADA recommends that fluoride varnish be applied every 3-6 months. In Ohio, children covered by Medicaid can have fluoride varnish applied every 180 days by a dental provider. Children may be able to get additional fluoride varnish treatments during a well-child visit at the doctor's office.

## What do you do after a fluoride varnish treatment?

Your child should eat a soft diet, avoid drinking hot liquids and products containing alcohol like mouth rinses for six hours following the treatment. Avoid hard foods including pretzels, apples, celery, and carrots.

Also, avoid brushing and flossing for at least four to six hours. Your child's health care provider may tell you to wait until the next morning to brush or floss. By leaving the varnish on the teeth, the fluoride is slowly absorbed into the tooth surface.

Your child's teeth may not be white and shiny until the fluoride varnish is brushed off.

## Resources Used:

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