

# Fluoride Varnish Protects Teeth

## What is Fluoride Varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is applied on teeth to prevent cavities. It can also be applied on teeth that already have cavities. 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 one or two times each year. The number of times depends on whether your child is at risk for early childhood tooth decay.

## How is Fluoride Varnish Put On?

The varnish is painted onto your child's teeth using a small disposable brush. It takes only a few seconds and is easily accepted by children.

## Is Fluoride Varnish Safe?

Yes. Fluoride varnish has been used for several years in many countries. Along with being safe, fluoride is an inexpensive and practical way to reduce tooth decay.

## After Fluoride Varnish is Painted On

Your child's teeth may look yellow or cloudy on the first day. This color will gradually go away. It is normal for the fluoride varnish to make the teeth feel sticky. This only lasts a short time.

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

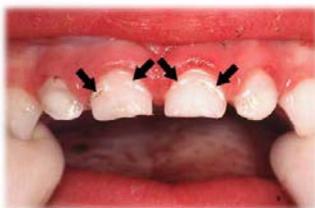
- eat only soft foods for the rest of the day;
- avoid dry, crunchy and sticky foods to prevent the varnish from being scraped off too soon. (e.g. crackers, fruit rollups, toffee, gum);
- avoid hot foods and beverages for the next six hours. (e.g. soup, tea, coffee, hot chocolate); and
- not brush or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

## 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 the dental health educator/dental therapist in your health region.



Find areas that need fluoride varnish.



Dry teeth with a gauze.



Paint fluoride varnish on teeth.

All photos courtesy of the University of Iowa, Department of Pediatric Dentistry