

Fluoride Varnish

Starting in February 2024, Tender Care Pediatrics, based on guidelines from the AAP, ADA and AAFP, will be offering fluoride varnish starting at the 6-month-old well child check and going every 3 months until the child sees a dentist or the 2-year-old well child check.

What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish (5% sodium fluoride) is used to prevent tooth decay. It lowers cavity causing oral bacterial levels and repairs and strengthens teeth. Fluoride varnish is a topical application and not considered systemic. It is endorsed by the American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatrics and American Academy of Family Practice. The United States Preventive Services Task Force has proposed the application of fluoride varnish by medical providers.

Is fluoride varnish safe?

Yes! Fluoride varnish can be used on babies from the time that they have their first tooth (around six months of age). Fluoride varnish has been used to prevent cavities in children in Europe for more than 30 years. It is approved by the FDA and is supported by the American Dental Association.

What do I need to know about fluoride varnish?

In brief, it is safe and effective and can be quickly applied to the teeth. Infants and children can eat and drink shortly after application. The main purpose is to strengthen the enamel of the teeth and helps reduce the incidence of cavities by 30-35% and can even reverse early cavity formation.

Is there anyone that cannot get fluoride varnish?

Although rare, children with allergies to colophony (colophonium) and pine nuts could have allergic reactions to fluoride varnish.

How is fluoride varnish put on my child's 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, but your child may cry just because babies and children don't like having things put into their mouths by other people. Your child's teeth may be a little bit yellow after the fluoride varnish is painted on, but this color will come off over the next few days.

How long does the fluoride varnish need to be applied?

The fluoride coating works best if painted on the teeth two to four times a year.

What is the cost?

Since this is recommendation from the US Preventive Services Task Force starting in May of 2015, most insurances will pay for the preventative care maintenance up to 4 times per year. We would ask that you check with your insurance company if they do not cover these services. Please call our billing department if there are any outstanding questions.

What do I do after the varnish is put on my child's teeth?

Following application of fluoride varnish, your child may drink and eat right away, but should avoid hot liquids or crunchy foods. Do not give him or her sticky or hard food until the next day. Do not brush or floss the teeth until the next morning. This treatment does not replace brushing your child's teeth or taking a fluoride supplement.

Does fluoride varnish cause fluorosis?

No. Fluorosis is caused by long term over-exposure to fluoride. Fluorosis is caused by children who consume too much fluoride on an ongoing basis. For example, using excessive amounts of toothpaste or using fluoride tablets when their water supply is fluoridated. Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, no published evidence indicates that professionally applied fluoride varnish is a risk factor for dental fluorosis, even among children younger than six years of age. Proper application technique reduces the possibility that a patient will swallow varnish during its application and limits the total amount of fluoride swallowed as the varnish wears off the teeth over several hours.