

FLUORIDE VARNISH

What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent cavities and to help slow or stop decay (cavities) that has just started. Only a small amount of fluoride varnish is used. Fluoride varnish is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and is endorsed by the American Dental Association and Dental Hygiene Association.

Why is fluoride varnish important for children?

Tooth decay is one of the most common diseases seen in children. Bacteria in the mouth use sugar and carbohydrates from food to make an acid that causes tooth decay. Anyone who has teeth can get cavities, but cavities are preventable. Fluoride varnish is one effective decay-preventing measure for children.

How is fluoride varnish put on the teeth?

A thin coat of fluoride varnish is painted on the teeth with a brush. When the fluoride varnish comes in contact with saliva, it hardens.

How long does fluoride varnish last?

It is best not to eat hot, sticky foods the same day that fluoride varnish is applied and it is recommended not to brush the teeth for at least four hours after the fluoride varnish has been applied. Once you brush your child's teeth at bedtime the actual varnish will be removed; however, the benefit of the fluoride will last for several months.

Should my child receive a fluoride varnish application?

Fluoride varnish is a topical fluoride that helps prevent the teeth from decay and can prevent the need for dental fillings. If decay is in the early stages, the fluoride can slow or stop the decay process which can save time, money and the discomfort that is sometimes associated with dental fillings.

Will my child feel or see the fluoride varnish?

Your child's teeth will feel tacky until the varnish hardens, which takes 20 seconds. After the fluoride varnish has been applied, your child's teeth may have a temporary slight color change or flaky residue until the teeth are brushed.

Does my child need to do anything else to prevent tooth decay after a fluoride varnish application?

Fluoride varnish protects the teeth, but regular dental visits and good oral hygiene are needed to protect the other parts of the teeth, gums and mouth. Children should brush their teeth at least twice a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride, floss once a day, make wise food and drink choices, and visit a dental professional twice a year.



For more information about dental care for your child contact:
Oral Health Program
Division of Family Health
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200
701.328.2356 or 800.472.2286
www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth



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