



Fluoride Varnish: What Parents Want to Know

Healthy gums and teeth are important to your child's overall health. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants receive oral health risk assessment by 6 months of age. Once your child has a tooth, your pediatrician may recommend that your child receive fluoride varnish treatments to help prevent tooth decay.

What is Fluoride Varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a dental treatment that can help prevent and slow down tooth decay. Fluoride varnish treatment in combination with a healthy diet, brushing with fluoride toothpaste, and seeing a dentist regularly will help decrease the chances of your child having tooth decay.

Is Fluoride Varnish Safe?

Yes. It is used by dentists and doctors all over the world to help prevent tooth decay in children. A very small amount of varnish is used. The varnish hardens quickly after it is applied to the teeth.

How is Fluoride Varnish Applied?

Fluoride varnish is either painted on or rubbed on with a finger. It is very sticky but quickly hardens. Fluoride varnish, nor the application, harms or hurts your child; but, young children may still cry before or during the application.

Why is a Pediatrician Applying Fluoride Varnish?

Pediatricians and their clinical staff are trained to apply fluoride varnish because many young children do not see or have access to a dentist until they are older. If your child is seeing a dentist, they may only see a dentist once or twice a year. Your pediatrician can apply fluoride varnish in addition to the dental provider.

After Application Care Instructions:

Your child can eat and drink right after the fluoride varnish is applied; but, try to refrain from giving your child crunchy food or hot liquids for 6 hours. Do not brush or floss teeth for 4-6 hours.

Fluoride Varnish Facts:

- Varnish can be applied up to 4 times per year; twice by your dentist and twice by the pediatrician – starting from the time the first tooth erupts up until age 13.
- Varnish is not permanent and is recommended to be re-applied at frequent intervals.
- Varnish may temporarily dull teeth, but your child's teeth will return to normal after brushing.
- Varnish application takes less than 5 minutes and can be done at any visit.

Good Dental Health Care is Achieved By:

- Getting regular dental care by a dentist
- Getting the recommended amount of fluoride
- Engaging in regular brushing and flossing
- Eating healthy

Resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics – Healthchildren.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Division of Oral Health – Children's Oral Health