



Fluoride Varnish: The Start of a Healthy Smile

Tooth decay is one of the most common diseases seen in children today. Children as young as 10 months can get cavities (holes in the teeth). Cavities in baby teeth can cause pain, and may prevent children from being able to eat, speak, sleep, and learn properly. Healthy gums and teeth are important to your child's overall health! Once your child has a tooth, we may recommend Fluoride Varnish treatments in our office, up to every 3-6 months, from the time of first tooth eruption until 5y of age or older. Our clinical staff is trained to apply Fluoride Varnish. If your child is seeing a dentist at a young age, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Fluoride Varnish may be applied in a dental office as well.

What is Fluoride Varnish?

Fluoride Varnish is a dental treatment that can help prevent tooth decay, slow it down, or stop it from getting worse. Fluoride Varnish is made with fluoride, a mineral that can strengthen tooth enamel, the outer coating of teeth, and can actually help repair early tooth decay. Fluoride Varnish is part of healthy teeth regimen that includes brushing with the right amount of fluoride toothpaste, taking a fluoride vitamin if your water supply does not contain adequate amounts, flossing regularly, getting regular dental care, and eating a healthy diet. Most children like the taste!

Is Fluoride Varnish Safe?

Fluoride Varnish has been used to prevent cavities in children in Europe for more than 25 years, and is supported by the American Dental Association. Only a small amount is used, and hardly any fluoride is swallowed. It is quickly applied, hardens, then can be brushed off after 4-6 hours. Some brands of Fluoride Varnish may slightly discolor teeth or cause them to look dull. The appearance will return to normal after the varnish is brushed off.

How is Fluoride Varnish Put on the Teeth?

Fluoride Varnish is painted on the top and sides of each tooth with a small brush. It is sticky but hardens once it comes into contact with saliva. Your child may feel the hardened varnish with the tongue, but will not be able to lick it off. Applying Fluoride Varnish does not hurt, but your child may still cry during the procedure. Fortunately, the procedure is very brief, and can often be completed in under a minute. You may be asked to hold your child in your lap while you are placed knee to knee with the person applying the varnish.

How Do I Care for My Child's Teeth After Fluoride Varnish is Applied?

Do not brush your child's teeth for 4-6 hours. Avoid eating and drinking for up to 60 minutes if possible. Do not give your child hard or sticky foods until the following day if possible. It is ok to get another treatment after 3-6m, at the dentist, or our office. This treatment does not replace brushing your child's teeth, or taking a fluoride supplement, as indicated.

Insurance Coverage

All Medicaid and virtually all commercial insurances cover Fluoride Varnish application. If it's not a covered service, you may be responsible for the charge.