CHILDSMILE

Fluoride varnish for children



NHS SCOTLAND

Healthier Scotland
Scottish Government

What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a mineral that helps to prevent tooth decay. It can be found in toothpaste and fluoride varnish.

What is fluoride varnish and what is it used for?

Fluoride varnish is a pale yellow gel which is painted on to children's teeth using a soft brush. The varnish sets quickly and has a pleasant taste and a fruity smell.

Scientific studies from around the world have shown that fluoride varnish can give added protection to teeth against tooth decay.



At the dentist

In Scotland, it is recommended that all children receive applications of fluoride varnish at least twice-yearly from the age of 2. Some children may benefit from two further applications.

Childsmile nursery and school

If your child attends a Childsmile nursery or school participating in the fluoride varnish programme, the Childsmile dental team will offer two further fluoride applications during the year.

The applications received in nursery and school are in addition to the two fluoride varnish applications received in your dental practice. They are safe and will give added protection to your child's teeth.

You should let your dental practice know if fluoride varnish has recently been applied at nursery or school. This allows the dental practice to space out your child's fluoride varnish applications to ensure the maximum benefit.

You will receive a consent form for your child to participate in the Childsmile nursery and school programme. It is important that you complete and return this form. You will be contacted by Childsmile before each visit and given the opportunity to tell us about any changes to your child's medical history and personal details.

On the day of application

Fluoride varnish may not be applied if your child has sore areas in or around their mouth.

Some children may not have fluoride varnish applied if they have previously been hospitalised due to asthma or allergies. For these children, a full risk assessment will be carried out by a dentist and a decision taken on whether fluoride varnish will be applied.

Aftercare instructions

After the fluoride varnish application your child should eat soft foods for the rest of the day, which will help the fluoride varnish stay on the teeth for longer. This will provide the best possible benefit.

Brush your child's teeth and gums at least twice daily, in the morning and last thing at night. Use toothpaste containing at least 1,000 parts per million (ppm) fluoride.

Children who swallow too much fluoride over a long period of time may develop white spots on their teeth. This is not tooth decay. The risk of developing white spots as a result of fluoride varnish, or toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste, is very small.

Your child should not be given fluoride drops or tablets for two days after the fluoride application. After that, continue as directed.



This resource may also be made available on request in the following formats:

translations | easy to read | audio | BSL | large print | braille

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Visit **www.child-smile.org.uk**

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