

Fluoride Varnish: Frequently Asked Questions

What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is applied to teeth to help prevent cavities.

Why is fluoride varnish recommended?

Cavities can cause pain and infections, which can lead to problems eating, speaking, playing and learning. Fluoride varnish makes teeth stronger, stops cavities from getting worse and helps to prevent new cavities from forming.

Is fluoride varnish safe?

Yes. Fluoride varnish is safe for any age. It can even be used on babies when their first teeth come in. If you have questions or concerns about using fluoride varnish, talk to your doctor or dentist. Children should see a dentist starting by age 1.

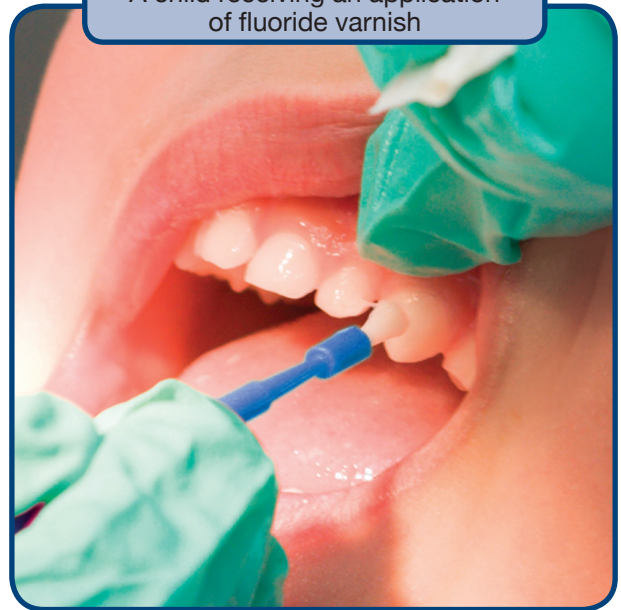
How is fluoride varnish applied?

Fluoride varnish is painted on teeth with a brush by a trained dentist, dental hygienist, doctor or nurse. It is a quick and easy process, and there is no pain or bad taste. The varnish sticks to the teeth and may temporarily make teeth look yellowish or less shiny. These changes are normal and will go away when the teeth are brushed the next day.

How long does fluoride varnish last?

Fluoride varnish keeps protecting teeth for several months. It works best if it is reapplied every three to six months.

A child receiving an application of fluoride varnish



Can I eat, drink or brush my teeth normally after fluoride varnish is applied?

Wait until the next day to brush teeth, and avoid hot, hard or sticky foods after the fluoride varnish application. Hard or chewy foods might chip the varnish off.

Is fluoride varnish covered by insurance?

Most dental insurance providers, including Medicaid and Child Health Plus, cover fluoride varnish application. Call 311 for more information about signing up for public health insurance or to find a low-cost dental provider near you.

For more information about oral health, visit [nyc.gov](https://www.nyc.gov) and search “teeth.”