



Brighter Smiles Oral Health Programme

Fluoride Information for Parents

What is Fluoride?

Fluoride is a mineral which is found naturally in many foods and in some water supplies.

How does it benefit our teeth?

It acts on the enamel covering of the teeth to make it stronger and more resistant to tooth decay.

How can I help my child to get the benefit?

Fluoride can be taken in childhood as a supplement i.e. liquid or tablets. It is added to most tooth pastes, it is added to the water supply in some areas of the country, and it is also available as a varnish which can only be applied by a dental professional.

Is there any fluoride in the water?

There are traces of fluoride in the water in Cornwall but not enough to benefit our teeth.

What about toothpaste?

The treatment complements the toothpaste that is applied daily. The varnish contains 22,000 parts per million (ppm) which is higher than in toothpaste

Is it safe?

Too much fluoride could cause fluorosis (a mottling of the teeth). Fluoride varnish delivers a controlled amount to the tooth.

How does Fluoride varnish work?

It is applied to the parts of the teeth which are most exposed to acid attack.

What are the benefits of having fluoride varnish?

Research has shown that fluoride varnish treatments are the most effective way to reduce the level of decay in teeth.

How often will this need to be done?

To get the most benefit this should be done twice a year.

How will the fluoride be put on the teeth?

It will be applied by a dental professional with special training following a check by a dentist. Everything is done under sterile conditions.

What happens after the application?

To get the maximum benefit you should not eat or drink for half an hour after your treatment and not brush your teeth for 6 hours.

Should anyone not have fluoride?

In certain cases it may not be advisable for Asthmatics to have fluoride varnish applied as they may be allergic to some of the ingredients, but a complete medical history will be taken at the examination stage.