



Fluoride Treatments for the Life of Your Teeth

Do you need fluoride?

There are a number of reasons why someone may require a fluoride treatment. There are a number of conditions that result in increasing the probability of developing cavities. These factors must be evaluated for each person individually to determine whether or not they would benefit from fluoride treatment. If any of the following statements apply to you then you may benefit from a specific fluoride therapeutic program that can help you keep your teeth for life.

- No fluoride in your drinking water as a child
- No fluoride in your drinking water now
- Drink filtered or bottled water
- Have receding gums or history of gum disease
- Have multiple fillings and/or crowns
- Strong family history of dental decay
- Mouth feels dry; or take medications that cause dry mouth; or mouth breather
- Currently wear orthodontic braces
- Have sensitivity to hot, cold or touch
- Use home whitening products
- Limited hand dexterity
- Use of chewing gum, lozenges, strong breath mints or hard candy with sugar between meals
- Visit dental office irregularly
- Currently undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy
- Suffer from acid reflux
- Teeth that just don't feel clean; trap food
- Dental work done in the past year
- Snack frequently between meals
- Sip on beverages throughout day (other than water)
- Use tobacco products of any type
- Grind teeth frequently
- Brush less than 2 times per day
- Floss less than once per day

Fluoride is a mineral that is found naturally in many things we eat or drink. It is nature's way of helping prevent cavities. Professional strength (in-office) fluorides and low strength (home) fluorides each play important roles in helping to keep your teeth for life. In the lifelong fight against cavities, both adults and children benefit from in-office treatment and home fluorides. Professional in-office fluoride products are highly concentrated and can only be applied by a dental professional.

Professional in-office fluorides make teeth stronger and even heal (remineralize) weakened areas. Over time, the high level of fluoride provided by the in-office fluoride treatment will gradually be released from the teeth. This is where low strength, home fluorides such as toothpastes and mouth rinses play a valuable role. These home fluorides are an important and valuable complement to the office treatment by replenishing and maintaining a beneficial level of fluoride in the teeth. Think of office fluoride treatments and home fluorides as your aids in the lifelong fight against cavities.

Fluoride Treatments and Water Fluoridation

The Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario has formally adopted a policy statement that supports the fluoridation of municipal drinking water as an important approach to oral health promotion and disease prevention. The RCDSO joins the Canadian Dental Association in affirming its support for fluoridation of municipal water supplies as an economical and effective means of preventing cavities in all age groups.

There has been a marked decrease in tooth decay rates- between 35% and 50% in children and 30% in adults in areas where fluoride has been added to municipal water supplies. Children need fluoride protection while their teeth are developing. Adults also need it since the possibility of cavities on the exposed root surfaces of teeth increases as they get older.

Nearly 100 national and international organizations and governments endorse the fluoridation of drinking water to prevent dental decay. They include the Canadian Dental Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Pediatric Society, Health Canada, the American Dental Association, and the International Association for Dental Research and the World Health Organization.

Opponents to water fluoridation claim that it increases the risk for a range of health problems from cancer to Down Syndrome. The safety and effectiveness of water fluoridation have been re-evaluated frequently, and no credible evidence supports an association between fluoridation and any of these conditions.

Fluoride works in several ways. It is incorporated into enamel during tooth development and makes the teeth more resistant to decay. Fluoride also inhibits the demineralization of enamel. This action requires fluoride from topical sources such as drinking water and fluoride products. Fluoride also enhances the remineralization of enamel. The fluoride adsorbs to the crystal surface within demineralized areas of enamel or dentin and attracts calcium ions and phosphate ions to form new mineral. The fluoride ion also directly inhibits cavity-causing bacteria from producing organic acids that cause the breakdown of the enamel.

The Truth About Your Teeth and Fluoride

Myth: Fluoride is only for kids.

Fact: Fluoride helps develop strong tooth enamel on children's growing teeth but it also helps to harden the surface enamel on adult teeth. It is important to teens with braces and to adults with crowns and bridges. Plaque build-up around braces and dental work can make teeth more vulnerable to cavities. Many adults also have to protect the surface of the tooth where their gums have receded. Fluoride prevents cavities, reverses early tooth decay, remineralizes tooth enamel and controls tooth sensitivity.

Myth: I get enough fluoride in my toothpaste.

Fact: Toothpaste with fluoride definitely helps to protect your teeth against cavities. The concern is that brushing doesn't reach all tooth surfaces especially those between the teeth and at the back of the mouth. These are common sites for cavities. As a result, dentists often recommend a fluoride rinse in the office or for home use.

Myth: I can get too much fluoride from dental care products.

Fact: Fluoride is recognized as the most effective anti-cavity ingredient available. It is unlikely that you will get too much from using topical products such as toothpaste and mouth rinses. The reason is that this fluoride is not swallowed. It is either absorbed by the teeth or spit into the sink.

Myth: I don't have cavities so I don't need fluoride.

Fact: Your teeth are constantly exposed to the risk of cavities and gum disease. Plaque forms continually on tooth surfaces and along the gumline. When you eat, the bacteria in plaque convert the sugar from foods into acid. This acid can eat away at the calcium and phosphorous minerals in your teeth and causes your teeth to demineralize. Fluoride actually helps to remineralize the teeth. It bonds with the dental enamel to make it harder and more resistant to acid attack.

If you have any further questions please call our office at 905-508-2244.