You can help prevent tooth decay in children.

Wipe your baby's gums with a clean, damp cloth after feeding, even before their teeth appear.

Do not put a baby to bed with a bottle. If you must, make sure it is only filled with water.

Brush teeth twice a day for at least two minutes with toothpaste that has fluoride.

Take children to the dentist by their first birthday.

Visit the dentist regularly.

Give children healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables.

Avoid sharing toothbrushes, eating utensils, or cups.

Drink tap water if your community water system or private well has fluoride in it.

For more information on oral health, visit **health.maryland.gov/oral-health.**

FLUORIDE VARNISH
Help prevent or stop tooth decay in children.

MARYLAND
Department of Health

Non-Discrimination Statement
The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability in its health programs and activities.

English
Help is available in your language: 410-767-5300 (TTY: 1-800-735-2258). These services are available for free.

Español/Spanish
Hay ayuda disponible en su idioma: 410-767-5300 (TTY: 1-800-735-2258). Estos servicios están disponibles gratis.

Chinese
中文
用您的语言为您提供帮助: 410-767-5300 (TTY: 1-800-735-2258). 这些服务都是免费的

August 2018

Fluoride varnish helps strengthen teeth and can prevent or stop tooth decay in children.

What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on the teeth. Over a period of time, the varnish releases fluoride, which strengthens the teeth and prevents tooth decay.

Why is fluoride varnish recommended for children?

Fluoride varnish helps prevent or stop tooth decay. If tooth decay remains untreated, it causes pain and infections that may lead to poor general health and problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning.

Is fluoride varnish safe?

Fluoride varnish is safe and can be used on babies from the time they have their first teeth. Only a very small amount of fluoride varnish is used.

How is fluoride varnish applied to the teeth?

The fluoride varnish is painted on the teeth with a paint brush. It is quick and easy to apply. Follow directions from your dental or medical provider for brushing and eating after treatment.

How often should fluoride varnish be applied?

The fluoride varnish will work best if applied at least twice per year. Your dental or medical provider will determine if more frequent application is necessary.

Who can provide fluoride varnish application?

A trained dental or medical provider.

Baby teeth are important.

Baby teeth help children learn how to talk and to be able to speak clearly.

Baby teeth also make sure there is enough space in children's mouths for permanent teeth.

Overall, baby teeth are important for proper feeding and nutrition, and are important to help maintain your child's general health.

Care following a fluoride varnish application:

After a fluoride varnish application, parents and caregivers should give children soft foods to eat.

They should also help children avoid hot, hard, or sticky foods after the fluoride varnish application.