



## **Information for Caregivers About Fluoride Varnish**

### **Why do we recommend putting a fluoride varnish on children's teeth? Because your baby's teeth are important!**

Tooth decay is one of the most common diseases seen in children today. Children as young as 10 months can get cavities (holes in the teeth). Cavities in baby teeth can cause pain and may prevent children from being able to eat, speak, sleep, and learn properly. Children should not normally lose all of their baby teeth until they are about 11 or 12 years old.

### **What is fluoride varnish?**

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and to help stop cavities that have already started.

### **Is fluoride varnish safe?**

Yes! Fluoride varnish can be used on babies from the time that they have their first tooth (around six months of age). Fluoride varnish has been used to prevent cavities in children in Europe for more than 25 years, and is supported by the American Dental Association.

### **How is fluoride varnish put on my child's teeth?**

The varnish is painted on the teeth. It is quick and easy to apply and does not have a bad taste. There is no pain, but your child may cry just because babies and children don't like having things put into their mouths by other people. Your child's teeth may be a little bit yellow after the fluoride varnish is painted on, but this color will come off over the next few days.

### **How long does the fluoride varnish need to be applied?**

The fluoride coating works best if painted on the teeth two-four times a year.

### **What do I do after the varnish is put on my child's teeth?**

Do not brush your child's teeth for 12 hours. Do not give your child anything to eat or drink for 60 minutes. Do not give him or her sticky or hard food until the next day. It is okay to get another varnish treatment after three months (with your doctor, dentist, or at school) or sooner if recommended. This treatment does not replace brushing your child's teeth or taking a fluoride supplement (if your doctor or dentist has prescribed it).

## **Remember, Baby Teeth are Important!**

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