

Fluoride

Frequently Asked Questions

What is fluoride?

Fluorides are a large group of chemical compounds formed when fluorine combines with other elements. Fluorides are found everywhere-in soil, air, water as well as plant and animal life. We all consume very small amounts of fluoride daily from foods that we eat.

How does fluoride work?

When teeth are forming, the minerals needed are deposited in the tooth buds by the bloodstream. When one of the minerals is fluoride the tooth structure is stronger than it would be without fluoride. As a result, the tooth enamel will be more resistant to the acids in the mouth that cause decay.

How do I get fluoride?

There are two basic ways to get fluoride:

1. To swallow it-as with drinking water and fluoride supplements.
2. To apply it topically-as with toothpaste, varnish or gel treatments form the dentist.

How do I know if my drinking water has fluoride?

In Winnipeg, fluoride is added to our drinking water. If you live outside of the city, or if your water supply comes from a well, you should have your water tested for fluoride levels. Do not take fluoride supplements unless it is recommended by your dentist.

What about bottled water?

Most bottled water does not contain fluoride but it is best to read the label. If you use a Brita, the fluoride will remain.

What is fluoride varnish?

It is a thick semi-liquid that is allied to a baby's teeth to provide protection.

What kind of fluoridated toothpaste is the best?

Simply check the toothpaste label to ensure that it is approved by the Canadian Dental Association. Children under the age of three should not use fluoridated toothpaste since they are not able to spit it out. For children or adults, only use a "pea-sized amount" of toothpaste.

What is a fluoride gel treatment?

The gel is placed in trays that sit in the mouth for one minute. The gel provides protection from cavities for children and adults. The gel also provides protection form hot and cold sensitivity for adults.

Is fluoride safe?

Fluoride is the most economical and effective method of protecting teeth. When used in recommended amounts, it is a safe and easy way to care for teeth.

