

## What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a natural mineral found in water. The amount of fluoride in the water varies from area to area.

## What are the benefits of fluoride?

Fluoride has been researched for over 50 years and water fluoridation has been proven to cut dental decay by 40 to 60%. Fluoride is present in many different natural sources, but can also be artificially added to our drinking water. Fluoride can greatly help dental health by strengthening the tooth enamel, making it more resistant to tooth decay.

## Is it in my water supply?

Yes, but the natural level is too low to be of benefit to our teeth. In Hull the level of fluoride in the water supply is 1/10th of the required amount. The exact amount depends on which area you live in.

## Are fluoride toothpastes enough?

Many toothpastes now contain fluoride, and from the age of 3, a toothpaste with 1350-1500 ppm is recommended. This information is on the tube of toothpaste, so check before you buy.

## How can I use fluoride to improve the dental health of my family?

### Follow these simple steps:

- Use a fluoride toothpaste twice a day with 1350-1500 ppm (adult toothpaste) from the age of 3.
- Spit, don't rinse, think of the toothpaste as a night cream for teeth – regenerating and renewing tooth enamel!
- Bring your children to the dentist for a fluoride varnish application at least twice a year, more if the dentist recommends it.
- If your child is at higher risk of dental decay, for example if they have braces on their teeth or because of excessive or frequent sugar consumption, consider a further supplement such as a mouthwash or high dose toothpaste. The dentist will suggest the correct formulation, as this depends on the age of the child.

## What is a fluoride varnish?

A fluoride varnish is a gel that helps to strengthen the tooth enamel, making it more resistant to decay. The gel has a fruity taste which will temporarily colour the teeth for 1-3 days until it gradually wears off.

## How will the fluoride varnish be applied to my child's teeth?

This is a very quick and simple procedure carried out by specially trained dental nurses, which involves the gel being painted onto the teeth using a soft brush. We recommend that children over three years old have a fluoride varnish at least twice a year.

## Are there any special instructions I need to follow afterwards?

Aftercare instructions will be given to your child to take home on the day the fluoride varnish is applied.

## Are there any side effects?

'Dental fluorosis' can occur when too much fluoride is taken when the teeth are forming (in the early years of life).

This can happen for example when the water supply is already fluoridated and supplements such as drops or tablets are taken, or when children are allowed to 'eat' toothpaste or suck it from the tube. We do not recommend tablets or drops, and only a smear of toothpaste is required to protect teeth and you should always try to minimise the amount swallowed.

## Is fluoride safe?

Many reports have been published about the risks and benefits of fluoride. After many years the scientific conclusion is that fluoride is of great benefit to dental health and helps to reduce dental decay, while causing no harmful side effects to general health.



Joining this programme  
**WILL HELP  
PROTECT  
YOUR CHILD**  
from tooth decay



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## The Teeth Team

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## Tooth brushing and fluoride varnish programme

This leaflet provides parents with information on how we can help your child have healthier teeth by being part of the Teeth Team tooth brushing and fluoride varnish programme at school.

Hi, I'm Big Bad Wolf  
Did you know Fluoride  
Varnish is great for kids'  
teeth and dental health?



Fluoride varnish has been **proven** to help reduce the risk of children developing dental decay.

#### Want to know more?

**Call:** 01482 565 488

**Email:** [info@teethteam.co.uk](mailto:info@teethteam.co.uk)

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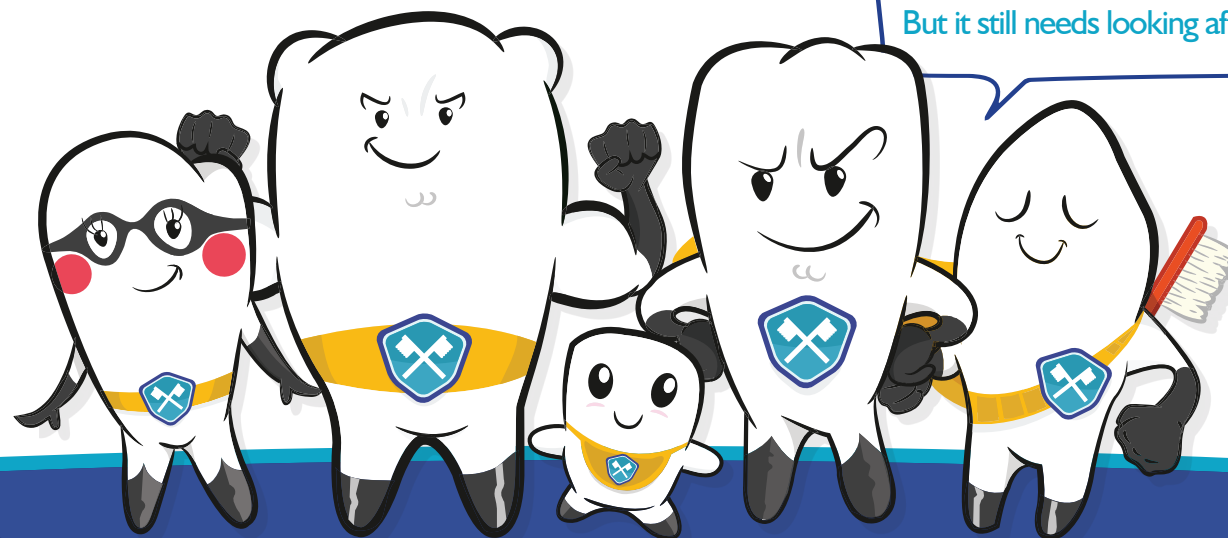
### How will my child's teeth grow and develop over time?

- Most babies' teeth start to emerge between the ages of six to ten months and should be cared for as soon as they are visible by wiping with a cloth. Once they have completely appeared, a fluoride toothpaste and baby toothbrush should be used. If your baby's teeth haven't started appearing by their first birthday, we recommend consulting a dentist.
- A full set of baby teeth should be in place by three years and, at four years, your child can begin to floss their teeth.
- Around six years old, children start to lose their baby, or 'milk' teeth, and will start to see their permanent 'adult' teeth coming through. They can now begin using mouthwash. Over the next couple of years, you can gradually supervise their brushing less, although spot checks are always recommended.
- By the age of 12 to 14 most children will have had all of their baby teeth replaced by adult teeth. The only ones left now are the wisdom teeth, which usually appear between the ages of 17 and 21, but sometimes never appear at all.

### How can I encourage my child to brush their teeth properly?

- **Set a good example.** Children love to copy their parents, so brush your teeth in front of them and show them how it's done.
- **Make it a habit.** Establish a routine for brushing in the morning and before bed.
- **Help your child** with brushing up to the age of 7, and encourage them to "spit, rather than rinse", so that fluoride stays on the teeth, like a "moisturising cream". This is particularly effective at night, as the fluoride can work whilst they are asleep to repair early areas of decay.
- **Make it fun.** Buy them a fun brush, in their favourite colour or with their favourite character on it.
- **Give them praise.** Parents often remind their children to brush, or reprimand them for not doing it well enough, but it's just as important to tell them when they're getting it right.

**Did you know?**  
Tooth enamel is the hardest  
substance in the human body.  
But it still needs looking after!



### When should my child first visit the dentist for a checkup?

As soon as possible! Unfortunately, around 25% of British children develop tooth decay by the age of five. We recommend you bring your baby in around their first birthday, both to avoid future problems with their new teeth and also to develop good oral hygiene habits that will set them up for life.

### How does diet affect my child's teeth?

Any sugar your child eats or drinks reacts with the bacteria in their mouth to form acid. This acid attacks their teeth and can damage the enamel, causing a hole, or 'cavity' to form. Cavities can require fillings in adult teeth, or lead to the premature extraction of baby teeth.

### Which foods can hurt their teeth?

The usual suspects include sweets, chocolate, cakes and fizzy drinks, but there are other culprits you might not have considered. Anything high in carbohydrates will be converted into sugar by the body and is therefore a risk. And even healthy foods, such as fruits, can cause tooth damage as they're high in fructose (fruit sugar). It's therefore a good idea to give your children a drink of water when they're eating fruit.

**Did you know?**  
One can of Coca Cola (338ml) contains  
9 teaspoons of sugar, and that's not  
good for your teeth! Working to  
educate young children about the risks  
to their teeth from everyday foods and  
drinks is an important step towards  
better long-term oral health.

