District Health Department No. 4

Prevent. Promote. Protect

FLUORIDE

Fluoride is a mineral that occurs naturally in all water sources, even the oceans. Fluoride is effective in preventing and reversing the early signs of tooth decay. Fluoride makes the tooth surface (enamel) stronger, so teeth are more resistant to acid attacks.

COMMUNITY FLUORIDE

Fluoride's contribution to improved public health cannot be underestimated. The Centers for Disease Control and Protection declared fluoridation of community water to be one of the top ten greatest public health achievements in the 20th Century. According to the American Dental Association, the benefits of water fluoridation include: · Reduces tooth decay · Prevents loss of teeth · Reduces dental infection, pain, and suffering

FLUORIDE VARNISH

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on a child's teeth to prevent cavities. It dries instantly and only takes minutes to apply. The varnish releases fluoride over several months, which strengthens the outer layer of teeth and prevents decay. It can be painted on teeth that already have cavities. Fluoride can help stop cavities from getting bigger. The fluoride varnish needs to be reapplied every 3—4 months to maintain its effectiveness.

BRUSHING WITH FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE

Children under 3 years

Begin brushing the teeth of your children as soon as teeth begin to come into the mouth. Use no more than a grain-of-rice-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste on the brush. Watch children to make sure they don't swallow the toothpaste.

Children ages 3 to 6 years

Put no more than a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste on the toothbrush. Help your child brush and teach him or her to spit out the toothpaste and not swallow it.

Children under 6 years

Fluoride mouth rinses are not recommended for children under 6 years. Parents should keep an eye on children under 6 years when they use any dental product with fluoride. More fluoride is not always better. These products should be stored out of the reach of young children.

WILL FLUORIDE CAUSE HEALTH PROBLEMS?

Will fluoridation cause health problems? More than fifty years of scientific evidence shows that fluoridation of the community water supply is both safe and effective in improving oral health. In August 1992, the National Research Council released a report prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) confirming that adding fluoride to water does not contribute to cancer, kidney failure, bone disease or Alzheimer's disease.

BENEFITS OF FLUORIDE

- Studies show that water fluoridation reduces cavites by at least 25% in children and adults
- Saves money
- It' safe and effective
- It's easy

HEALTHY SMILE TIPS

- Brush your teeth 2 x a day with a fluoride toothpaste
- Clean between your teeth daily
- Eat a healthy diet that limits sugary beverages and snacks
- See your dentist regularly

Fluoride protects teeth in two ways:

- Topically - when it is put onto the tooth's surface
- Systemically - when it is swallowed

To prevent cavities, it is best to get a little bit of fluoride both ways

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www.dhd4.org
100 Woods Circle Suite 200
Alpena, MI 49707
989-356-4507