



Fluoride treatment

Also known as: Topical fluoride • Fluoride therapy

Boost your defense

What is it?

During a professional fluoride treatment, a dentist or hygienist applies fluoride to your teeth to protect them from decay.

Who needs it?

- **Children** ages 6 and up who are at a moderate or high risk of decay
- **Adults** who are prone to cavities, suffer from dry mouth or have a condition that puts them at risk (such as diabetes, eating disorders and cancer)



Why fluoride?

Strengthens your enamel. The process, called remineralization, keeps your teeth hard, making it more difficult for cavities to form.

Fights cavity-causing bacteria before they can eat away at your teeth.



Did you know?

Depending on your risk level, fluoride treatments may be applied every three, six or 12 months.

How is it applied?

- **Foam** — inserted into a tray that you are required to bite down on
- **Gel or varnish** — painted on your teeth with a brush
- **Oral solution** — you have to swish it in your mouth for 60 seconds, then spit it out (although they may look the same as the kind of rinse you can find at the drugstore, these solutions have a higher concentration of fluoride)

After your fluoride treatment, you should avoid eating or drinking for at least 30 minutes.

Type of fluoride:

- **1.23% acidulated phosphate fluoride (APF)**: most common choice for cavity-prone patients
- **2% neutral sodium fluoride**: used for patients who have dry mouth or tooth-colored fillings, crowns or bridges



But I already use fluoride toothpaste at home. What's the difference?

Your everyday fluoride toothpaste is important, but it doesn't have the same impact as a professionally applied fluoride treatment. Here's why:

1. Professional fluoride treatments have a higher level of fluoride, which you can't get without a prescription.
2. The dentist or hygienist usually applies the fluoride to freshly cleaned teeth, making it even more effective. Even if you brush every day, your teeth will not be as smooth as they are following a professional cleaning.

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