

# Facts About Fluoride

## What is Fluoride?

Fluoride is nature's cavity fighter and occurs naturally in varying amounts in water sources such as rivers, lakes and even the oceans. Fluoride is naturally present to some extent in certain foods and beverages, but the levels vary widely. To help protect teeth from cavities, fluoride is also added to some dental products such as toothpaste, mouthwash, and fluoride varnish.



## What is Fluoride Varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a dental treatment that can help prevent tooth decay, slow it down, or stop it from getting worse. Fluoride varnish is made with fluoride, a mineral that can strengthen tooth enamel (outer coating on teeth).

Keep in mind that fluoride varnish treatments cannot completely prevent cavities. Fluoride varnish treatments can best help prevent decay when a child is also brushing using the right amount of toothpaste with fluoride, flossing regularly, getting regular dental care, and eating a healthy diet.



## How is Fluoride Varnish Put on the Teeth?

Fluoride varnish is painted on the top and sides of each tooth with a small brush. It is sticky, but hardens once it comes in contact with saliva. Your child may feel the hardened varnish with his or her tongue but will not be able to lick the varnish off.



It does not hurt when the varnish is applied. However, young children may still cry before or during the procedure. Fortunately, brushing on the varnish takes only a few minutes. Also, applying the varnish may be easier when a child is crying because his mouth will be slightly open.

You may be asked to hold your child in your lap while you are placed knee-to-knee with the person applying the varnish.

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## Fluoride Varnish Codes (Medicaid-eligible)

\*D1206 and 99188 will be reimbursed at the same rate. Each can be billed two (2) times per year, equaling four (4) fluoride varnish treatments per year.

Medical Providers	
Code	Description
99188	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topical application of fluoride varnish by a <b>medical</b> provider</li><li>• Patient must be under 6 years of age</li><li>• Limit 2 applications per year per patient</li><li>• Code can only be billed once within a 6-month period</li><li>• Fluoride varnish should be applied at the time of a well-child visit or health screening</li><li>• An oral health risk assessment should be conducted prior to application</li></ul>
Dental Providers	
Code	Description
D1206	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topical application of fluoride varnish by a <b>dental</b> provider</li><li>• Patient must be under 21 years of age</li><li>• Limit 2 applications per year per patient</li><li>• Code can only be billed once within a 6-month period</li><li>• Service provided at a <b>dental</b> visit</li><li>• D1206 <u>cannot</u> be billed in conjunction with D1208</li></ul>
D1208	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topical application of fluoride – excluding fluoride varnish</li><li>• Same description applies as D1206</li></ul>

**Smiles for Life**  
A national oral health curriculum

For additional information please visit [www.Smilesforlifeoralhealth.org](http://www.Smilesforlifeoralhealth.org) and click on:

**Course 6: Caries Risk Assessment, Fluoride Varnish, and Counseling**

This course focuses on caries prevention. It offers a brief review of Early Childhood Caries (ECC) and addresses how the use of fluoride is part of a comprehensive approach to a child's oral health. Specifically, clinicians will learn the benefits, appropriate safety precautions, and dosing for fluoride, as well as how to apply fluoride varnish and provide adequate follow-up care.



*Improving health, one smile at a time.*

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

**For additional resources or information, please contact:**

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