

# Step-by-Step Guide to Fluoride Varnish Application

## Equipment & Supplies

Basic tools are needed to apply fluoride varnish and perform an oral exam in a medical setting.

The procedure requires: a good light source (such as a pen light or headlamp), disposable gloves, a bib or paper towel, 2" x 2" gauze squares and the fluoride varnish. A disposable mirror and tongue depressor are optional.

Fluoride varnish is typically sold in unit-dose containers, packaged with individual disposable brush applicators.



## Varnish Application

When implemented by healthcare providers, **fluoride varnish has been shown to decrease the incidence of tooth decay by 33%.<sup>\*</sup>**

Applying fluoride varnish is a simple procedure that can be safely performed on infants, children, and adolescents.

**STEP 1.** Dry the teeth using either gauze or other cotton products.

**STEP 2.** Using the disposable, manufacturer-supplied brush, apply the varnish to coat all surfaces of all anterior teeth.

**STEP 3.** Apply the varnish to coat all surfaces of all posterior teeth.

Fluoride varnish is quite sticky. Although children may eat and drink immediately following the application, parents and caregivers should be advised to avoid brushing children's teeth for the remainder of the day. This helps to maximize the time the varnish is in contact with the teeth.

<sup>\*</sup>Marinho VC, Higgins JP, Logan S, et al. Fluoride varnishes for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2002;CD002279.