

# FLUORIDE, BOTTLED WATER, AND ORAL HEALTH

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **What is fluoride?**

The mineral fluoride occurs naturally on earth and is released from rocks into the soil, water, and air. All water contains some fluoride.

Fluoride has been proven to protect teeth from decay. Fluoride helps to rebuild and strengthen the tooth's surface, or enamel.

Water fluoridation prevents tooth decay by providing frequent and consistent contact with low levels of fluoride. By keeping the tooth strong and solid, fluoride stops cavities from forming and can even rebuild the tooth's surface.

### **Does bottled water contain fluoride?**

Bottled water products may contain fluoride, depending on the source of the water. Fluoride can be naturally present in the original source of the water, and many public water systems add fluoride to their water.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates fluoride in bottled water and sets limits, based on several factors, including the source of the water.

Bottled water products labeled as de-ionized, purified, demineralized, or distilled have been treated in such a way that they contain no, or only trace amounts, of fluoride, unless they specifically list fluoride as an added ingredient.

### **Is the amount of fluoride in bottled water always listed on the label?**

The FDA does not require bottled water manufacturers to list the amount of fluoride on the label, unless the manufacturer has added fluoride within set limits. Labels have to specifically list fluoride as an added ingredient, if it is added.

If the amount of fluoride is not on the bottle's label, contact the bottled water's manufacturer to ask about the fluoride content of a particular brand.

### **Can I use bottled water for mixing infant formula?**

Yes, you can use bottled water to mix powdered or liquid concentrate infant formulas, but the fluoride content in bottled water varies.

Some water companies make bottled waters for infants and for the purpose of mixing with formula. When water is labeled as intended for infants, the water must meet tap water standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and indicate that the water is not sterile.

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## What other fluoride products are available?

*For all of the products below, talk to your pediatrician or dentist about what options are best for your child.*

### Fluoride Varnish

Fluoride varnish is painted by a dental or medical professional directly onto the teeth. Varnishes must be reapplied at regular intervals with at least 2 applications per year. Fluoride varnish applications are recommended on all children 0-5 years old beginning when the first tooth grows in. Fluoride varnish is recommended every 3-6 months depending on the cavity risk of the child.

### Fluoride Mouth Rinse

Children younger than 6 years of age should not use fluoride mouth rinse without consultation with a dentist or other health care provider because dental fluorosis could occur if such mouth rinses are repeatedly swallowed.

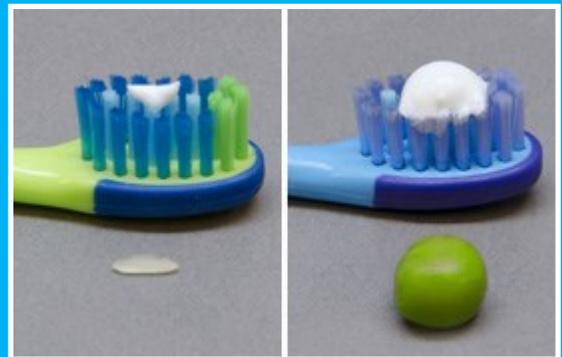
Fluoride mouth rinse is a concentrated solution intended for daily or weekly use. Over the counter fluoride mouth rinses or prescription fluoride supplements may be recommended for high risk children.

### Fluoride Toothpaste

Fluoride toothpaste is available over-the-counter and makes up more than 95 percent of toothpaste sales in the United States.

## How much toothpaste should my child use?

- Children under 3 years old should use a **grain of rice size/smear of toothpaste** 2 times a day with parental supervision.
- Children 3-6 years old should use a **pea size amount of toothpaste** 2 times a day with parental supervision.
- Adults should brush 2 times a day with fluoridated toothpaste.



*Under Age 3      3-6 Years of Age*

## Where can I go for more information?

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Fluoride website at [www.cdc.gov/fluoridation](http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation).

For information about free water filters or bottled water, visit [www.michigan.gov/flintwater](http://www.michigan.gov/flintwater) or call United Way 211.