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

Keep in mind that fluoride varnish treatments cannot completely prevent cavities. Fluoride varnish treatments can best help prevent decay when also using the right amount of toothpaste with fluoride when brushing, 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. When used on children, the child may feel the hardened varnish with their tongue but will not be able to lick it off. The application of the varnish does not hurt, however, young children may still cry before or during the procedure. Fortunately, brushing on the varnish takes only a few minutes.

Fluoride varnish codes (Medicaid-eligible)

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

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Medical Providers	
Code	**Description**
99188	• Topical application of fluoride varnish by a **medical** provider • Patient must be under 21 years of age • Limit 2 applications per year per patient • Code can only be billed once within a 6-month period • Fluoride varnish should be applied at the time of a well-child visit or health screening • An oral health risk assessment should be conducted prior to application

Dental Providers	
Code	**Description**
D1206	• Topical application of fluoride varnish by a **dental** provider • Patient must be under 21 years of age • Limit 2 applications per year per patient • Code can only be billed once within a 6-month period • Service provided at a **dental** visit • D1206 cannot be billed in conjunction with D1208
D1208	• Topical application of fluoride – excluding fluoride varnish • Same description applies as D1206

For additional information on fluoride and caries prevention, please visit
www.Smilesforlifeoralhealth.org > Learn Online > Course 6: Caries Risk Assessment, Fluoride
Varnish & Counseling. It offers a brief review of early childhood caries 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.

If you have any questions, please contact the Customer Care Center at **1-800-782-0095**.

For additional resources or information, please contact:
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