

# SILVER DIAMINE FLUORIDE PATIENT FACT SHEET



## WHAT IS SILVER DIAMINE FLUORIDE?

Silver diamine fluoride (SDF) is an odorless liquid that contains silver particles and fluoride. It is applied by a dentist, or other dental provider, directly to cavities with a small brush. SDF is used to stop cavities from getting worse, and help keep teeth healthy.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SDF?

SDF can help stop cavities from getting worse, which will delay or prevent the need for more invasive treatments such as fillings, crowns, or extractions (pulling teeth). SDF also helps relieve tooth sensitivity. SDF is a fast, easy, and painless treatment—your dentist will not need to use drills or anesthesia injections. SDF may be a good option for people who have trouble with other types of cavity treatments, including for cavities that need more than one treatment, are difficult to treat, or people with limited access to dental care. Very young children, persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities, and older adults may also prefer SDF. SDF application is recommended every 6 to 12 months to stop cavities from getting worse.



## IS SDF SAFE?

Yes! There have been no reported cases of major health risks or severe reactions to SDF. SDF does contain silver, however, so it should not be used for people with allergies to silver or ulcers in the mouth.



## WHAT OTHER TREATMENTS ARE THERE?

Other treatments for cavities include fillings or crowns, and extraction (pulling teeth). These treatments may require anesthesia or sedation.



## WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SDF?

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. (2017). Use of silver diamine fluoride for dental caries management in children and adolescents, including those with special health care needs. Reference Manual, 39(6), 146-155. Available at [www.aapd.org/media/Policies\\_Guidelines/G\\_SDF.pdf](http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_SDF.pdf).

Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors. (2017). Silver diamine fluoride (SDF) fact sheet. Available at [www.astdd.org/www/docs/sdf-fact-sheet-09-07-2017.pdf](http://www.astdd.org/www/docs/sdf-fact-sheet-09-07-2017.pdf).

## WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF SDF?

SDF has cosmetic side effects, such as temporary brown or white stains on skin and gums that have been touched by SDF, which can last up to 3 weeks. SDF also permanently stains tooth cavities black, however, the healthy parts of the tooth will not be stained. It is important to know that teeth will continue to decay and have cavities if there is no change in dental care habits (such as brushing teeth and avoiding sugary drinks and snacks).

### BEFORE TREATMENT



### AFTER TREATMENT



*Photos used with permission from Dr. Beau Meyer*



## THE MEDICAID EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION PROJECT (MED)

MED, housed at the Center for Evidence-based Policy at Oregon Health & Science University, is a collaboration of state agencies that produces reports and other tools to help state policymakers make the best, evidence-based decisions for improving health outcomes.

# Fluoride

## FAST FACTS

Fluoride is a natural substance that is found in rocks, soil, and water. It prevents tooth decay in children and adults.

### Fluoride helps keep teeth healthy by:

- Stopping the growth of bacteria that cause cavities
- Strengthening tooth enamel
- Reversing early tooth decay by replacing and preventing the loss of minerals that make teeth healthy



The U.S. Public Health Service recommends 0.7 parts per million of fluoride in drinking water, or about 3 drops of fluoride in a 55-gallon barrel, to prevent tooth decay.

Today, the majority of the U.S. population receives fluoridated water.\*

73%



\* Decisions about water fluoridation are made at the state or local level.

### You can get fluoride by:

- Drinking local tap water that has fluoride in it
- Using fluoride toothpaste/mouth rinse
- Getting varnish/gel at the dentist's office
- Taking a dietary supplement



After adding fluoride to the community water supply, tooth decay decreased in both children and adults, and complete tooth loss in older adults became much less common.



1940s



2014

Tooth Decay  
in U.S. Schoolchildren



1960-62



2017-19

Complete Tooth Loss in  
U.S. Adults Ages 65-74

At about age 2 (or sooner if a dentist or doctor suggests it), brush your child's teeth with a tiny amount of fluoride toothpaste.



For children aged 3 to 6, parents should put the toothpaste on the brush. Use only a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Encourage your child to spit out the toothpaste rather than swallow it.



Additional resources



National Institute of Dental  
and Craniofacial Research