

Fluoride Mouthrinse Program



Weekly Fluoride Rinses For A Healthy Smile

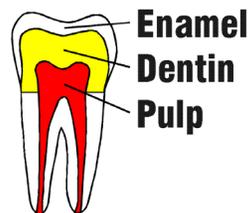
Once a week! Five minutes! That's all it takes!

Since 1979, New Brunswick's elementary school children have had the benefits of a fluoride mouthrinse program. Research has shown that the program is effective in reducing cavities in children by as much as 20 to 30 percent.

How Does Fluoride Work?

The tooth is made of three layers: enamel, dentin and pulp. The enamel is the outer layer of the tooth and gives the tooth its white color. It is hard and protects the inner layers, the dentin, which is softer, fragile and yellow, and the pulp, which contains nerves and blood vessels.

When we eat, the organisms living in our mouth produce acid. That acid will attack the enamel and will seep into it. This process can produce a weak spot in the tooth's surface that we call decay. The acid will then attack the dentin and finally the pulp. OUCH!



Fluoride is a naturally occurring element that prevents, by several mechanisms, tooth decay. First, it slows down the destructive action of the acid. Secondly, it speeds up the reconstruction of tooth enamel in areas that have been attacked by acids. This results in a reversal of the early decay process. Finally, fluoride reduces the ability of plaque organisms to produce acid.

Extra Protection For Your Child's Teeth

Fluoride gives you extra protection. It is a supplement to other good dental health habits such as regular brushing, flossing, and dental check-ups. You can also find sources of fluoride in "fluoridated drinking water", toothpaste, high concentration fluoride gels, tablets, and drops.

How It's Done

Once a week, teachers or volunteers prepare a fluoride solution at school. Together, the students rinse with the solution for one minute and then discharge the liquid into paper cups. The entire procedure takes less than five minutes of class time per week.

Advantages Of The Program

Weekly mouth rinsing is beneficial for a number of reasons.

- It prevents tooth decay.
- It is free. There is no direct cost to participating children and parents. Funding is provided by the Department of Health.
- It is easy for children to learn.
- It is safe. Teachers or volunteers are trained to prepare the fluoride solution.

Preparing Your Child

Supervise brushing, and encourage your child to rinse with water after brushing. Your children should know why they take fluoride rinse. Understanding "why" they are rinsing will help them make wise health choices in the future.

Parental Consent

All that is required for a child to participate is parental consent. Each parent receives a letter outlining the program. Parents must sign and return an approval form to the child's school before the child is permitted to participate.

For further information on the Fluoride Mouthrinse program, contact your local Public Health office.