

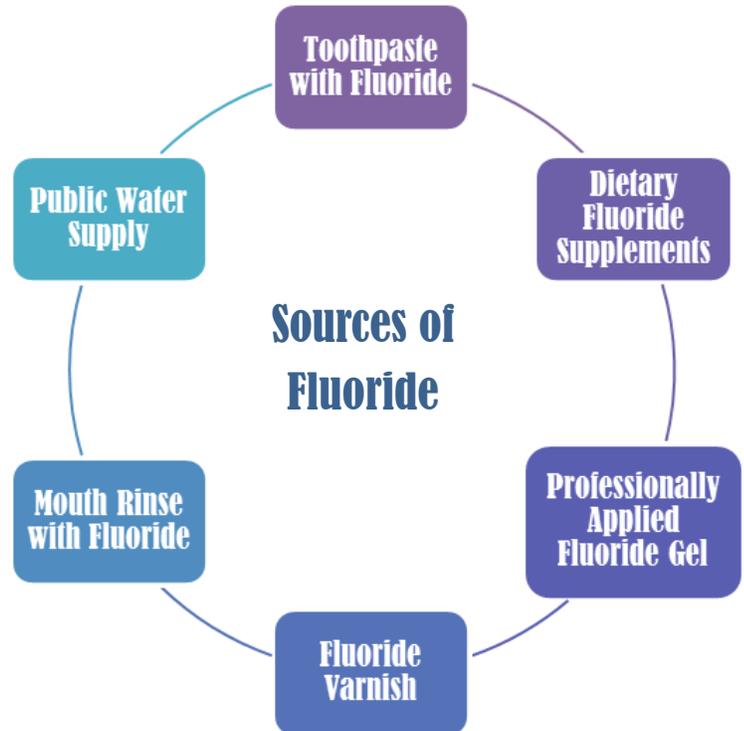
The Facts about Fluoride

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that is present in water at varying levels.

Fluoride can be found in rocks, soil, and in both fresh and ocean water.

Fluoride is Important

- ◆ Helps prevent tooth decay from forming on teeth.
- ◆ Can reverse some signs of early tooth decay.
- ◆ Regular use helps make teeth stronger and more resistant to tooth decay.
- ◆ Kills germs that cause tooth decay.
- ◆ Low-cost and safe method for preventing decay.



Toothpaste



Brush with toothpaste containing fluoride twice daily to prevent tooth decay.

Dietary Fluoride Supplements



Fluoride tablets, drops or lozenges are available from your dentist or doctor with a prescription for children ages 6 months to 16 who live in areas with little or no fluoride in the water supply. Find out if your water supply contains adequate levels of fluoride to determine eligibility.

Professionally Applied Fluoride Gel



Applied by dentists or dental hygienists in the office using a mouth tray, typically twice a year.

Fluoride Varnish



Applied using a small brush on the teeth several times a year by dentists, dental hygienists or participating medical providers.

Mouth Rinses



Some mouth rinses contain added fluoride. Check the label, and ask your dentist if mouth rinse with fluoride is right for you.

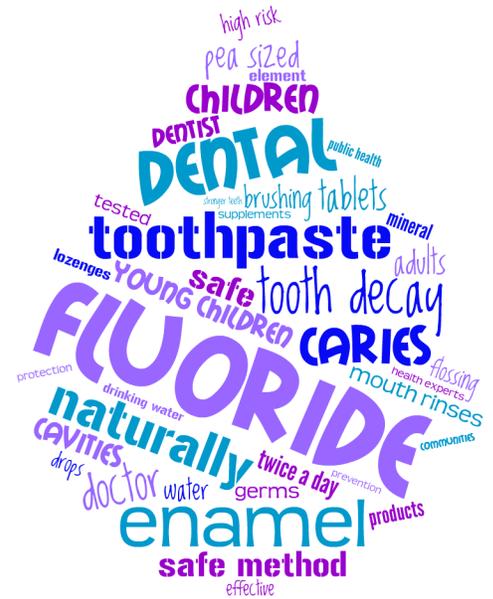
Public Water Supply



Health experts endorse water fluoridation as the single, most effective public health measure to improve oral health.

Is Fluoride Safe?

- ◆ More than 65 years of study and experience have shown the safety and benefits of water fluoridation.
- ◆ The addition of fluoride to drinking water can be compared to the addition of Vitamin D to milk.
- ◆ Both fluoride and Vitamin D occur naturally and provide significant health benefits when present at a sufficient level in a person's diet. For example, Vitamin D helps strengthen bones and can prevent bone disease. Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel and can help prevent cavities.
- ◆ Many public water systems in Maryland supplement the natural fluoride found in water to a level that provides optimal protection from tooth decay.



Toothpaste Guide for Children

- ◆ Children at high risk for tooth decay should use toothpaste that has fluoride as early as possible.
- ◆ Children should be supervised and assisted with brushing until old enough to brush on their own.
- ◆ Never allow your child to share toothbrushes, it spreads germs.

Checklist



- ◆ Find out if the water in your public water system or private well has fluoride. Contact your local health department and/or get your water tested to determine the level of fluoride. Visit <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/oralhealth/Documents/FluorideAndWaterTestingLabs.pdf> for water testing site information.
- ◆ Ask your child's dentist or pediatrician if fluoride supplements are right for your child.



How Much Toothpaste with Fluoride?



Under Age 3: Slight smear about the size of a grain of rice



Ages 3 - 6:
Pea-sized amount

(Toothbrush images courtesy of Dr. Norman Tinanoff, University of Maryland)

Spit, do not rinse after brushing.

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