

# COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT FLUORIDE

A Resource for Parents and Caregivers



## 1. Why do children need fluoride?

Our mouths contain bacteria that combine with sugars in the foods we eat and the beverages we drink. This produces an acid that harms our teeth. Fluoride strengthens kids' teeth by fighting off this acid and even reversing early signs of tooth decay.



## 2. Is fluoridated water safe for me and my children to drink?

Yes. Decades of research, experience, and the support of the world's leading health, dental, and medical organizations have confirmed the safety of fluoride.



## 3. We brush our teeth with fluoride toothpaste every day. Do we still need fluoridated water?

Yes. Drinking fluoridated water throughout the day, combined with the more concentrated fluoride in dental products prevents more tooth decay than toothpaste alone.



## 4. Are there health risks associated with these forms of fluoride?

No. There is no credible scientific evidence that fluoridated water or dental products cause illness or disease.



## 5. What exactly is dental fluorosis? Should I be concerned about fluorosis from drinking fluoridated water?

Dental fluorosis is a slight change in the look of the teeth, usually in the form of very faint white markings. Most fluorosis is the result of consuming too much fluoride while permanent teeth are forming, before the age of 8. It does not affect the function or health of the teeth. In fact, teeth with mild fluorosis are more resistant to cavities.



## 6. Is it safe to mix infant formula with fluoridated water?

Yes, it is safe to mix infant formula with fluoridated water.



## 7. Are the fluoride additives used to fluoridate drinking water safe?

Yes. The fluoride added to public water meets strict safety standards and complies with the Safe Drinking Water Act.



## 8. How much fluoride should my child have to protect his/her teeth? Should my child get fluoride varnish at the doctor or dentist?

Children who consume a healthy diet, drink fluoridated water, and use fluoridated toothpaste will get all the fluoride they need for healthy teeth. Your doctor or dentist can help you determine if your child is getting enough fluoride. For more protection, fluoride varnish (sometimes called tooth vitamins) should be applied to your child's teeth by the doctor or dentist two to four times per year.



## 9. I have heard fluoride can cause all kinds of things, from lower IQ to cancer. Can that be true?

No. There is no credible scientific evidence that water fluoridated in the U.S. contributes to or causes poor health.



## 10. Is bottled water fluoridated?

Most bottled water is not fluoridated. If it is, it will say so on the label.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. This publication has been developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The authors and contributors are expert authorities in the field of pediatrics. No commercial involvement of any kind has been solicited or accepted in the development of the content of this publication. Copyright © 2025 American Academy of Pediatrics. You may download or print from our website for personal reference only. To reproduce in any form for commercial purposes, please contact the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The persons whose photographs are depicted on this document are professional models. They have no relation to the issues discussed. Any characters they are portraying are fictional.

