

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD)

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) is the recognized authority on children's oral health. As advocates for children's oral health, the AAPD promotes evidence-based policies and clinical guidelines; educates and informs policymakers, parents and guardians, and other health care professionals; fosters research; and provides continuing professional education for pediatric dentists and general dentists who treat children. Founded in 1947, the AAPD is a not-for-profit professional membership association representing the specialty of pediatric dentistry. Its 10,000 members provide primary care and comprehensive dental specialty treatments for infants, children, adolescents and individuals with special health care needs. For further information, please visit the AAPD website at <http://www.aapd.org> or the AAPD's consumer website at <http://www.mychildrensteeth.org>.

ASK YOUR DENTIST ABOUT

SILVER DIAMINE FLUORIDE



AMERICA'S PEDIATRIC DENTISTS

THE BIG AUTHORITY on little teeth®

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Why would a dentist recommend silver diamine fluoride (SDF) for my child?

SDF stops cavities from growing. The treatment is quick, comfortable and affordable. Because SDF keeps decay from getting worse, fixing the teeth can be put off until a child is older or has an easier time sitting through treatment. Sometimes SDF is the only treatment needed if the cavities in the teeth are very small.

What is silver diamine fluoride?

SDF is a colorless liquid made up of fluoride and silver ions. It kills the bacteria that cause cavities. In scientific terms, SDF acts as an antimicrobial agent that stops cavities from growing by making the tooth harder, and limiting the growth of bacteria that causes tooth decay.

What is the treatment like?

SDF is painted on a cavity with a small brush. Treating a cavity takes about two minutes. Best of all, the application does not hurt and requires no drilling or injection of anesthetic. The treatment has a metallic taste. It can sometimes cause a mild irritation to the gums that will heal by itself in a couple of days.

Is silver diamine fluoride safe?

Very safe, according to the evidence-based clinical guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. SDF has been used in Japan for over 40 years and in Australia and China for over 10 years. Most important, it can postpone or even prevent the need for sedation or general anesthesia, especially for very young patients.

You should not be treated with silver diamine fluoride if:

- You are allergic to silver.
- Cavities are so large that they involve the nerve of the tooth.
- There are open sores or ulcers in your child's mouth.



Before SDF is applied.

After SDF is applied.

Does it work to stop tooth decay?

Yes. Based on clinical trials, SDF works to stop cavities from growing in 70 to 90 percent of treated teeth (or as many as nine out of 10 teeth). Teeth treated with SDF need to be checked by a dentist at least every six months to make sure the tooth decay has been stopped.

Is it true SDF turns teeth black?

Cavities treated with SDF turn black, the teeth do not. This color change is permanent, lasting the life of the tooth. If the cavities are on the back teeth, it is barely noticeable. If the cavities are on the front teeth, it can be very noticeable. If SDF touches the lips or skin, perhaps when a patient moves too much during treatment, it will leave a dark stain for a few days.

As your child gets older and behavior and/or health improves, fillings or caps may be placed on the teeth to cover the discoloration.

Why treat cavities in baby teeth?

Cavities on children's teeth can grow very fast and cause pain and infection. The factors that started the cavities in the first place can cause decay in other teeth, and as cavities get larger, the nerve of the tooth can become infected and lead to serious infections in the body.

Baby teeth hold space for the proper placing of the permanent teeth. If a baby tooth is lost too early, it may mean a crooked smile in the child's future.

What can I do at home to prevent cavities?

For the treatment to work its best:

- Keep your child's teeth clean by brushing with fluoride toothpaste after breakfast and before bed,
- Cut down how much and how often your child has foods and drinks with sugar in them, and
- Visit your pediatric dentist at least every six months.

Important things you should know about this treatment are:

- If patients move too much, and the liquid touches their lips or skin, there could be a dark stain for a few days.
- If fillings cannot be done, SDF may need to be re-applied every six months for the effects to continue.