

Into The Mouths of Babes

NC Dental Screening & Varnish Project



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Early Childhood Oral Health Collaborative (ECOHC)

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Topical Fluoride Recommendations for High-Risk Children Under Age 6

Although community water fluoridation is considered the foundation for sound dental caries prevention programs, there are populations of children that experience higher rates of dental caries (tooth decay) and could benefit from additional fluoride exposure. Although the use of fluoride in dental caries prevention is considered safe and effective, there are questions among health professionals and programs working with young children at high risk of developing dental caries, as to the recommended use of topical fluoride. In an effort to address these questions the **Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)** convened an expert panel on October 22–23, 2007 to develop a decision support matrix on topical fluoride use for high-risk children. This matrix was developed primarily for a

nondental audience—programs, paraprofessionals, and professionals without formal dental education working with higher-risk children in public health settings (e.g., childcare centers, Head Start programs, WIC programs, primary care clinics) but could also be useful to parents and caregivers.

(Excerpt from Topical Fluoride Recommendations for High-Risk Children *Development of Decision Support Matrix*. Recommendations from MCHB Expert Panel October 22-23, 2007. Altarium Institute Washington DC)

The complete report can be viewed at:
<http://www.mchoralhealth.org/PDFs/TopicalFluorideRpt.pdf>

The following page shows the *Topical Fluoride Decision Support Matrix* developed by the MCHB expert panel.

Topical Fluoride Recommendations For High-Risk Children Under Age 6 Years

Decision Support Matrix

Population-Based Risk Factors

- Low-income children (e.g., enrolled in Head Start, WIC, free/reduced lunch program, Medicaid or SCHIP eligible, or other programs serving low-income children)
- Children with special health care needs

Fluoride Modality

Age

Children Under 2 Years

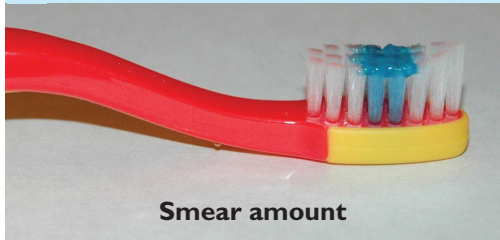
Children 2-6 Years

Toothpaste

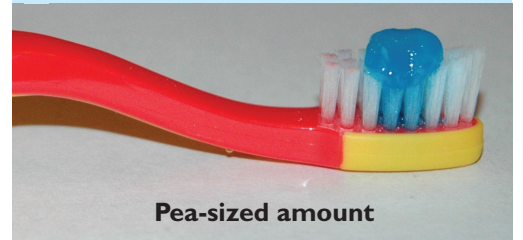


- Encourage parents and caregivers to take an active role in brushing their children's teeth once the first tooth erupts
- Educate parents and caregivers on proper fluoride toothpaste use
- Brush children's teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice daily
- Use a smear of fluoride toothpaste

- Encourage parents and caregivers to take an active role in brushing their children's teeth
- Educate parents and caregivers on proper fluoride toothpaste use
- Brush children's teeth with fluoride toothpaste, or assist children with toothbrushing, twice a day
- Use no more than a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste



Smear amount



Pea-sized amount

- Do not rinse after brushing

- Children should spit out excess toothpaste
- Do not rinse after brushing

Varnish

- Apply every 3-6 months

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Mouth rinses, gel, or foam

- Not recommended

- Not recommended