



FACTS to share with patients who ask about fluoride use in children.

Some patients may have questions about the use of fluoride for oral care in children. As there is fiction online that can be confusing to parents, here are a sample of questions you may hear with fact-based responses to empower your patients' choices.

Q: Why do you recommend a toothpaste or mouthwash containing fluoride for children?



FACT: For cavity prevention, fluoride is the most proven solution for children and adults.

Fluoride in toothpaste has the highest possible grade of evidence and support from almost all relevant dental and medical organisations across the world, including the World Health Organisation (WHO).

A recent systematic review by the established Cochrane organisation showed that fluoride containing toothpastes reduce the development of cavities by 24%.¹

Q: I read online that fluoride is toxic and poisonous. Do you think fluoride is safe for kids?



FACT: Fluoride has been recognised as being safe and effective by almost every dental and medical association in the world, including WHO.

Fluoride toothpaste has an excellent safety record going back over 50 years. It has been used safely by hundreds of millions of people around the world.

Fluoride toothpaste is not intended to be ingested. As young children are inclined to swallow toothpaste when cleaning their teeth, it is recommended that the brushing of children below six years of age should be supervised by adults.

Q: I am concerned about my child being overexposed to fluoride. Will it cause fluorosis or staining?



FACT: The small amount of fluoride that children would ingest during brushing with a fluoride toothpaste should not lead to fluorosis.

There is no scientific evidence to link the use of fluoridated toothpaste with the problem of systemic fluorosis even in endemic areas.

Fluorosis is caused by the long term, high ingestion of fluoride into the bloodstream during the first years of life (ages 8 and younger) and can cause white or even brown lines on teeth .

For more information about water fluoridation, please visit:
acffglobal.org/for-professionals/reference-materials/water-fluoridation/

Q: What does fluoride do to the teeth to protect against cavities? I would rather reduce sugar in my child's diet to prevent cavities.



FACT: Fluoride is added to toothpastes because it has been found to be beneficial in strengthening tooth surfaces and preventing dental cavities.

Sugars are in almost everything children eat—not just snacks and drinks, but also a balanced diet of fruits and vegetables. So reducing sugars alone is not enough to protect your child's teeth.

When we eat sugar, the bacteria living on our teeth use this sugar to grow and multiply. Dense bacterial masses (biofilms) form on the hard tissue and produce acids that attack our teeth and cause mineral loss in enamel and cavities.

Fluoride strengthens the enamel surface to repair the damage caused by sugar acid attacks, reverses early cavities and prevents further decay. Fluoride also supports the saliva's natural ability to remineralize enamel in-between sugar acid attacks.

For more information about fluoride toothpastes, please visit:
acffglobal.org/for-professionals/reference-materials/fluoride-toothpaste/

Q: Can you recommend me a natural, chemical-free alternative for my child?



FACT: Fluoride is derived from natural calcium mineral deposits in rock.

Fluoride-based oral care products are the gold standard for preventing cavities in children and adults.

Until non-fluoride alternatives have independent, well-established data to support their use, I will continue recommending fluoride products to all of my patients to prevent cavities.

For more information about the use of fluoride in oral care, please see the following:

FPO - Country specific links

ABO Brazilian Dental Association <https://www.abo.org.br/>

APCD Paulista Dental Association <http://www.apcd.org.br/>

Brazilian Society of Pediatricians <https://www.sbp.com.br/>

Ministry of Health <http://saude.gov.br/>

Brazilian Society of Pediatric Dentistry <http://abodontopediatria.org.br/site/>