

Selecting a toothpaste - fluoride or non-fluoride? - Smile Solutions

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Selecting a toothpaste – fluoride or non-fluoride? Does a stroll down the oral care aisle of your local supermarket or chemist overwhelm you with the abundance of choices available? You may have seen some toothpastes listing “fluoride-free” as a selling point. But what is fluoride and why is it in our conventional toothpastes at all? Fluoride can take many forms in toothpaste, sodium fluoride and stannous fluoride being the most common . When applied topically to the surface of the teeth, it performs several functions: Following an exposure to acids from the breakdown of carbohydrates by oral bacteria or directly from food or beverages (e.g. citrus fruits or flavouring, vinegar, wine, carbonated drinks), fluoride integrates itself into the mineral of the teeth by forming a crystal structure called fluorapatite. Fluorapatite is the most acid resistant mineral form that our teeth can take on. Without fluoride being regularly applied with twice daily brushing, the teeth are usually made up of hydroxyapatite crystals which are less resistant to acid attacks. The net result of this process is an increased vulnerability to dental decay and increased risk of needing fillings to repair the teeth. Fluoride is also an antibacterial chemical. By temporarily immobilising the acid-producing bacteria in our mouths, the bacteria cannot spit out acids when you eat carbohydrates, at least while you are brushing 12-hourly with a fluoride toothpaste. With fewer acid attacks, decay is less likely to take hold. When might you not require a fluoride toothpaste? If your diet is very low in acids (e.g. citrus fruits or flavouring, vinegar, wine, carbonated drinks) and carbohydrates then you can theoretically use toothbrushing alone to mechanically remove plaque (i.e. bacteria) from the teeth – you don't even need a toothpaste. However for the vast majority of people who eat a modern diet with processed foods and drinks this simply isn't appropriate. If you have a child under the age of 6, they typically don't need to use a full strength fluoridated toothpaste unless they are at a high risk of decay (depending on diet and toothbrushing abilities of the child and parent), as assessed by a dentist. Children under 2 years may use fluoride-free toothpaste, and children between age 2-6 may use a low-fluoride toothpaste. The age appropriateness of a product is usually listed on the packaging. Once a child begins to develop their adult teeth at age 6 onwards it's time to start using an adult strength fluoridated toothpaste. Between ages 6-14 it's critical to use a fluoridated toothpaste to ensure the teeth are made of highly acid-resistant fluorapatite crystals. To sum up – if you eat a modern diet containing sugar, simple carbohydrates (such as starches in potatoes, white rice, white flours) or other dietary acids, you need to be using a fluoridated toothpaste to prevent acid damage in the form of decay or dental erosion. If

you're still unsure of the need for this, discuss your lifestyle and risk factors with your dentist to establish a more tailored approach. Articles from Smile Solutions View Blogs Specialist Care Smile Solutions 18 Aug 2026 Endodontist vs Dentist for Root Canal: Why It Makes a Difference Read More General Smile Solutions 10 Aug 2026 Mouth Breathing: The Silent Habit That's Changing Your Face and Your Health Read More General Smile Solutions 3 Aug 2026 How Much Does a Dental Crown Cost in Melbourne? Materials Compared Read More Specialist Care Smile Solutions 18 Aug 2026 Endodontist vs Dentist for Root Canal: Why It Makes a Difference Read More General Smile Solutions 10 Aug 2026 Mouth Breathing: The Silent Habit That's Changing Your Face and Your Health Read More General Smile Solutions 3 Aug 2026 How Much Does a Dental Crown Cost in Melbourne? Materials Compared Read More Specialist Care Smile Solutions 18 Aug 2026 Endodontist vs Dentist for Root Canal: Why It Makes a Difference Read More General Smile Solutions 10 Aug 2026 Mouth Breathing: The Silent Habit That's Changing Your Face and Your Health Read More General Smile Solutions 3 Aug 2026 How Much Does a Dental Crown Cost in Melbourne? Materials Compared Read More View Blog Call Us 13 13 96 Location Level 1, 220 Collins Street Manchester Unity Building, Melbourne VIC 3000 Hours Of Service Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 6.00pm Saturday: 8.30am – 1.30pm Sunday: By Appointment Our Services General Dentistry Cosmetic Dentistry Orthodontics Specialist Care Dental Implants Children's Dentistry Emergency Dentistry Why Choose Us Our Team Media Awards Careers Technology Location Holistic Dentistry Quick Links Contact Us Articles Packages & Offers Dental Payment Plans Understanding Your Treatment Sitemap Privacy Policy Copyright © Smile Solutions. All Rights Reserved. This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply. Close Our Services General Dentistry Dental Cleans and Hygienists Wisdom Teeth Emergency Dentistry Root Canal Tooth Fillings Chipped or Cracked Teeth Snoring & Sleep Apnoea TMD & Teeth Grinding Sport Mouthguards Dental Anxiety Cosmetic Dentistry Porcelain Veneers & Crowns Same Day Porcelain Veneers™ Composite Bonding Professional Teeth Whitening CEREC Restorations Invisalign® No Braces All-on-4® Dental Implants Gummy Smile Complimentary Cosmetic Consultation Orthodontics Invisalign No Braces Orthodontic Braces Children's Braces and Invisalign Jaw Surgery Dental Implants All-on-4® Dental Implants Conventional & Immediate Implants Dental Bridges Bone Grafting For Implants Dentures Specialist Care Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons Prosthodontists Orthodontists Periodontists Endodontists Paediatric Dentists Complex Dentistry Children's Dentistry First Visit To The Dentist Children's Dental Emergencies Children's Braces and Invisalign Child Dental Benefit Schedule Kids Teeth Cleaning Tips Why Choose Us Our Team Our Location Technology Awards Holistic Dentistry Before After Gallery Payment Plans Packages & Offers Contact Us Call Us 13 13 96 Close Smile Solutions AI Assistant ■ Hello! I'm here to help you with questions about Smile Solutions. How can I assist you today? Popular questions: What services does Smile Solutions offer? How can I contact Smile Solutions What are your business hours? ■■ × 0 /1000 Contact Us Call Us 13 13 96 Location Level 1, 220 Collins Street Manchester Unity Building, Melbourne VIC 3000 Hours Of Service Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 6.00pm Saturday: 8.30am – 1.30pm Sunday: By Appointment Close Book Now