

The benefits of fluoride - Smile Solutions

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The benefits of fluoride

The use of fluoride has become a debated health topic over the last decade. I personally choose to use it and have recommended its use to my patients, friends and family. This recommendation comes from my understanding of the research and from clinical experience. Dental professionals and the public have known for decades that using fluoride reduces one's risk of dental caries – that is, dental decay or cavities. The crown of a tooth is made of hydroxylapatite crystals – broken down into the more commonly known elements of calcium, phosphate and fluoride. During the daily activities of eating and drinking, and from the acid produced by bacteria in our mouths, our teeth come under threat and minerals are lost. This process is called demineralisation. Demineralisation and tooth decay occur when the balance shifts, causing the loss of minerals to exceed the remineralisation/uptake of tooth minerals. In such circumstances, topical use of a fluoride product (like toothpaste) helps in the remineralisation process and reduces the likelihood of a cavity developing. Fluoride not only helps to mineralise our tooth enamel, it is also an antibacterial, and in correct concentration it helps to reduce specific bacteria that contribute to tooth decay. With the increase of refined sugars in the Western diet and the frequency of acid exposure through the consumption of popular beverages, fluoride and remineralising products have a large role to play. Over the last two decades a lot of research has been carried out into the remineralisation process and modes of delivery through dental products. Fluoride now comes in products like toothpaste, mouth rinses, dental varnishes and more. Your dental professional is your best resource for determining what you need based on your dental history and lifestyle risk factors; and their professional recommendations may change as your life does. Also, different fluoride concentrations are recommended for different ages and stages of life. If you are unsure of what you require, consult your dental professional .

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