



**LAKE
SAMMAMISH**
KIDS DENTISTRY

Fluoride FAQ

What does fluoride do?

Fluoride strengthens enamel, boosts remineralization, and helps fight cavity causing bacteria, leading to around 35% fewer cavities in baby teeth and 26% fewer in permanent teeth when optimal water fluoridation is used.

How much fluoride tooth paste is safe for my child?

Under age 3: use a smear or “rice grain” amount (~0.1 mg fluoride).

Ages 3 and up use a pea sized amount (0.25 mg fluoride).

Brush twice daily, supervise to avoid swallowing, and don't rinse afterward; just spit.

Are fluoride treatments recommended?

Children with early baby teeth should start fluoride varnish applications when the first tooth appears. This professionally applied treatment (usually 5% sodium fluoride) is recommended every six months, or every 3 months for high-risk kids until about age 5 or 6.

Does my child need a fluoride supplement?

If tap water isn't fluoridated (e.g. filtered, bottled, or well water), supplements (drops or tablets) may be recommended—but only after assessing all fluoride sources and the child's cavity risk. We do not routinely recommend fluoride supplements as topical fluorides may offer sufficient protection with a lower risk of fluorosis.

Is fluoride safe?

The only proven fluoride risk is dental fluorosis, which can leave faint white marks on permanent teeth in young children—especially between 15–30 months. Most cases are mild and not harmful. The risk drops off after age 8, once permanent enamel is fully formed. If you have concerns about fluorosis for your young child, we can discuss fluoride alternatives.