

Fluoride varnish

Patient information and aftercare

What is fluoride?

- Fluoride is a natural mineral.
- It is found in some foods like fish, tea, and certain seafood.
- Some areas in the United Kingdom also have fluoride in their tap water.
- It makes the outside of your teeth stronger and helps stop tooth decay.
- It can also be found in toothpaste and mouthwashes.

What is fluoride varnish?

- Fluoride varnish is a high fluoride concentration gel.
- It is applied to the teeth using a small brush by a Dental Professional.
- It sticks to the tooth surface for 12 hours or more in a thin layer.
- It slowly releases fluoride to strengthen the surface of teeth.



Image courtesy of Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme

When is fluoride varnish used?

It is recommended to have fluoride varnish applied at least twice a year for:

- All children over 3 years old
- Adults at high risk of tooth decay
- Some adults with sensitive teeth.

Aftercare instructions

Fluoride varnish should stay in place for as long as possible to work best.

- Teeth may look a little yellow for the rest of the day.
- Do not eat or drink for 30 minutes after fluoride varnish is applied.
- Do not eat hard or crunchy foods for four hours.
- Do not brush your teeth the night the fluoride varnish is applied.
- Brush as normal the following morning.
- Do not take other fluoride tablets, gels or rinses for seven days after the application.

Get more information about fluoride varnish

- Delivering better oral health

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention/chapter-9-fluoride>

Contact our service

Community Dental Service

Tel.: 020 3316 8353 (Monday to Friday 8.45 to 11.30 am and 2 to 4.45 pm)

Email: dentalreferral.whitthealth@nhs.net

Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

020 7272 3070 | Whittington Health NHS Trust, Magdala Avenue, London, N19 5NF
www.whittington.nhs.uk | x.com/WhitHealth | facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth

Document information

Date published: 09/04/2026 | Review date: 09/04/2028 | Ref: SC/DentServ/FVPI&A/03
© Whittington Health NHS Trust. Please recycle.