

Fluoride Varnish Program

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Public Health, in partnership with schools, will be offering up to two FREE fluoride varnish applications during the school year to help protect student's teeth from getting cavities. We are offering fluoride varnish to all elementary aged students in your school.



What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in soil, plant- and animal-based foods, and water. Because fluoride helps to prevent cavities, it is also added to various dental products. Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel (the outer layer of teeth), making them more resistant to cavities/tooth decay.

What is Fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that can be safely applied to teeth up to 6 times per year to prevent, stop or reverse cavities. It can also be applied on teeth that already have cavities. Applying fluoride varnish to teeth is quick and easy.

What is the Fluoride Varnish Program?

The Fluoride Varnish Program is a Public Health program that offers up to two extra applications of fluoride to teeth for students in pre-primary to grade 6 in selected schools. A Registered Dental Hygienist from Public Health will come to your school to apply fluoride varnish to students' teeth. The program is trying to help reduce cavities in school-aged children.

A small amount of varnish will be applied to visible surfaces of student's teeth using a small disposable brush. It is applied quickly and only takes a few seconds to harden.

A note will be sent home after each application.

This program is not meant to replace regular check-ups or fluoride treatments by a dentist, dental hygienist or other community oral health care program. The varnish application is not a complete oral health exam. A visual observation will be done for the purpose of applying the fluoride varnish.

How do I care for their teeth after fluoride varnish is applied?

Students can eat and drink right after the fluoride varnish is applied.

The fluoride varnish may appear and feel like a film on the teeth that will wear off in a few hours after application. They may brush and floss at bedtime. Students should not receive any other professional fluoride treatment or rinse with a home fluoride mouthrinse for 24 hours.

Is fluoride varnish safe?

Yes. Fluoride varnish is safe and used by dentists, doctors, and dental hygienists all over the world to help prevent tooth decay in children from the time the first teeth come in. The use of fluoride varnish is approved and recommended by Health Canada, the Canadian Dental Association, and the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association.

Is there a cost to participate in the fluoride varnish program?

No. There is no cost to students and families.



You should know:

Fluoride Varnish products contain a natural tree sap resin, also known as colophony and rosin, which some people can be allergic to. The tree sap resin is used to help the fluoride varnish stick to the tooth surface. This tree sap resin is also used in many everyday products such as in chewing gum and in the glue used for bandages. An allergy to tree sap resin is very uncommon, however, students with an allergy to colophony/rosin should not get fluoride varnish.

Students diagnosed with asthma by a healthcare provider must have their quick reliver medication (inhaler) with them to receive fluoride varnish. Students should be prepared to use their medication in case it is needed.

Why does the consent form ask if a student has been diagnosed with asthma by a healthcare provider?

Though uncommon, the tree sap resin in fluoride varnish may be an irritant to people diagnosed with asthma.

Healthcare providers diagnose asthma in children by asking about symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath, especially at night, during play, or with exposure to things like dust and pets. They listen to the child's lungs for unusual sounds. For older children (over 6 or 7 years old), they may use a breathing test called spirometry to check lung function. Since other conditions can have similar symptoms, the doctor or nurse practitioner may also check for infections or allergies before developing a treatment plan.

Questions?

If you have questions about the Fluoride Varnish Program, please contact your local Public Health office.



1

READ the information provided above.

2

COMPLETE the electronic consent form emailed to you earlier in September even if the student is not participating in this program.

Your consent is valid for this current school year unless cancelled in writing.



HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE

If you have any questions about the information in this booklet, or if there is anything you don't understand, contact your local Public Health office. You can also visit the Public Health website: www.nshealth.ca/public-health

Amherst 902-667-3319 or 1-800-767-3319	Digby 902-742-7141	Lunenburg 902-543-0850	Port Hawkesbury 902-625-1693
Antigonish 902-867-4500 ext. 4800	Elmsdale 902-883-3500	Meteghan Centre 902-742-7141	Shelburne 902-742-7141
Baddeck 902-295-2178	Glace Bay 902-842-4050	Middleton 902-542-6310	Sydney 902-563-2400
Berwick 902-542-6310	Guysborough 902-533-3502	Neil's Harbour 902-336-2295	Truro 902-893-5820
Bridgewater 902-543-0850	Halifax Regional Municipality & Eastern Shore 902-481-5800	New Glasgow 902-752-5151	Windsor & Wolfville 902-542-6310
Chester 902-543-0850	Inverness 902-258-1920	New Waterford 902-862-2204	Yarmouth 902-742-7141
Cheticamp 902-224-2410	Liverpool 902-543-0850	North Sydney 902-794-2009	