



Steps for Fluoride Varnish Application

1. You will need:

- Gauze sponges (2x2)
- Unit does of fluoride varnish
- Disposable dental mouth mirrors
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to include at a minimum: a face mask, eye protection to include goggles or protective eyewear with solid side shields, a surgical mask, and gloves. Visit the CDC [website](#) for up-to-date recommendations.
- Finger splint (optional)

2. Position the child using the following options:

- Place the child on the parent's lap with their legs around the parent's waist. Position yourself knee-to-knee with the parent with the child's head on the parent's knees or your lap so that you can apply the varnish from above the head.
- Place the child on an exam table and work from above the head.
- Adapt a method that works for you.

3. Apply the varnish:

- Using finger pressure, open the child's mouth. If the child is crying, this is normal and can make it easier to apply the varnish.
- Dry the teeth with a gauze sponge. **The teeth must be dry.**
- Use your fingers and a gauze sponge to dry the teeth. You will usually be able to dry a quadrant of teeth at a time but will have fewer teeth to work with in younger children.
- Apply a **thin** layer of the varnish to **all surfaces of the teeth**.
- Once the varnish is applied, you need not worry about moisture (saliva) contamination.
- Repeat the varnish application every three to six months, most successfully done at well-child visits.

4. Provide instructions to the caregiver to ensure a successful fluoride varnish application:

- Have the child eat a soft, non-abrasive diet for the rest of the day.
- Wait until the next day to brush the child's teeth.
- The teeth will not be white and shiny until the varnish is brushed off.
- Counsel the parent on brushing the child's teeth with a smear of fluoride toothpaste twice a day.

