



FLUORIDE - AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

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When most people hear the word “fluoride” they think of toothpaste, but fluoride is actually a natural component in healthy teeth and bones. Fluoride, as well as calcium and phosphorus, play an integral role in the makeup of tooth enamel and bone structure. Sufficient levels of these elements determine the durability, health, and appearance of teeth.

The outer enamel layer of teeth can become weakened over time due to the formation of dental plaque and insufficient fluoride levels. Bacteria present in plaque create a heavily acidic environment, especially in circumstances of exposure to certain foods such as carbohydrates and sugars, and cause these essential elements to leach out. When plaque is not mechanically removed by either a toothbrush or a dental instrument, the

effects advance from early-stage white spot lesions, which are the initial signs of weakened enamel, into incipient lesions and subsequently cavities.

Topical application of fluoride through fluoridated toothpastes, mouth rinses, varnishes, and other products serve as a means to strengthen enamel, remineralize broken down enamel, and prevent the destruction caused by bacteria in plaque. Fluoride is an essential tool which can be used at all stages of oral health.

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Creating an oral hygiene routine and choosing the best product for each individual need can be confusing at times. There are so many options of seemingly the same product in the toothpaste aisle and it can be difficult to decipher what is right for you.

Products which have the seal from the American Dental Association or the Ministry of Health can be relied on, however it is important to have a trusted dental professional involved in establishing your oral care routine to ensure the highest level of safety, compliance, and success. It is also important to check the label on any dental product and follow specific precautions, instructions and age recommendations for proper use.

Diligent use of these products will help combat the negative effects of bacteria in plaque but that alone is not enough to ensure healthy teeth and gums. Visiting your dentist regularly, cleanings every 6 months (or every 3 months for patients with braces or gum problems), and maintaining a good diet is the key to overall oral health and a beautiful smile.

Rachelli Bochner is an American trained Registered Dental Hygienist. She is up to date with the latest technology in oral health care and is dedicated to educating her patients on the importance and benefits of good oral hygiene.



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