

# WHEN SHOULD I START USING FLUORIDE FOR MY KIDS?

Dr. Peter S. Frandsen, San Diego Children's Dentistry

This is an excellent question. If you search for answers about fluoride on the internet, you will likely find a wide variety of information, some positive and some negative. The answer is much more simple: **using the appropriate amount of fluoride is both safe AND effective** in protecting against cavities. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends using no more than a smear or rice size amount of fluoride toothpaste for children under the age of three and no more than a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste for children ages 3-6. Their recommendation is based on the best dental scientific research available. After

two minutes of quality brushing, avoid eating or drinking for 30 minutes, including rinsing, to allow the fluoride to remain on the teeth and in the saliva. Fluoride has many dental health benefits, but ingesting too much fluoride at a young age can cause fluorosis in the developing permanent teeth. By following the AAPD

recommendation, you can maximize the benefits of fluoride toothpaste while minimizing the risk of developing fluorosis later on. Fluoride helps your teeth in a number of ways, mostly by helping the enamel, the protective, outer surface of your teeth, do its job. It slows the break down of enamel, helps to rebuild and strengthen the enamel, and also protects your teeth by blocking the cavity-causing bacteria. At the store you may find toothpaste that is labeled "training," "0-2 years," or "fluoride-free." It is simply formulated to help kids get used to the flavor of toothpaste but won't provide any protective benefits like a fluoride toothpaste would. Look for toothpaste that is labeled "fluoridated" or "anti-cavity" and approved by the FDA.



Left side: smear or rice size.

Right side: pea size.

## FLUORIDE HELPS THE TOOTH BY

1 SLOWING THE BREAK DOWN OF ENAMEL

2 REBUILDING ENAMEL

3 BLOCKING THE BAD BACTERIA THAT CAUSE CAVITIES



Dr. Frandsen is an ABPD Board Certified Pediatric Dentist, a member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and works at San Diego Children's Dentistry in Poway and Rancho San Diego



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**POWAY OFFICE**  
12324 Oak Knoll Road, Poway, CA 92064  
**(858) 360-8118**

**RANCHO SAN DIEGO OFFICE**  
2648 Jamacha Road, Suite 166, El Cajon, CA 92019  
**(619) 376-1202**