

# Mouth Matters

Integrating Oral Health  
into Medical Care



## Fluoride Varnish Application

- Start from the first tooth.
- Apply 2-4 times/year for maximum benefit. Many providers apply varnish on same schedule as childhood immunizations.
- As part of fluoride varnish application, this is also a good time to examine child's teeth for signs of decay.

### Supplies

- Cotton gauze (2x2)
- Fluoride packet (open, mix and bend brush before positioning child)
- Gloves

### Steps

#### ✓ Position the Child - Lap to Lap

- For an infant or toddler, place the child on the caregiver's lap with the head on their knees and the legs around the waist. Position yourself knee-to-knee with the caregiver and treat the child from above the head.
- For an older child, have them lay on exam table and work from above their head.



#### ✓ Apply the Fluoride Varnish

- Glove up (option to put varnish on glove).
- Dip brush in varnish.
- Open mouth. Dry\* upper teeth. Move brush along gum line and apply varnish in a straight line (not tooth by tooth).
- Start in back of mouth and move to the mid line.
- Reapply varnish to brush as needed.
- Apply to all surfaces. Special focus on upper front teeth and lower back teeth (teeth with highest risk for decay).
- Dry\* lower teeth and apply varnish.
- Sit child up.



\* Dry teeth are ideal, but if child is squirmy or crying, skip this step.

#### ✓ Follow-up Info for Parent

- May eat or drink immediately.
- Avoid eating very crunchy foods.
- No brushing or flossing until next morning (*toothbrush vacation*).

Visit our website to learn more:

[ArcoraFoundation.org/Mouth-Matters-Resource-Center](https://ArcoraFoundation.org/Mouth-Matters-Resource-Center)

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