

1. Would WIC staff ever be able to do fluoride treatments for children if trained by Cavity Free at Three?

At this point, WIC staff could apply fluoride varnish if delegated by or under a standing order by a licensed health care professional (physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, dentist, dental hygienist).

Fluoride varnish requires prescriptive authority. The service is reimbursable to licensed health care professionals (dental insurance, CO Medicaid, some medical commercial insurances) and the licensed professional can delegate the service to support staff.

Where does WIC fit in?

- Patient education: what happens at an infant dental visit? Why is fluoride important?
- Explaining that it is safe for a pregnant woman to receive dental treatment during pregnancy and that it is important for pregnant women to have dental treatment before delivery to limit transfer of cavity causing bacteria to her baby.
- Dental hygiene and healthy eating messaging.
- Alleviating any anxiety families have about dental treatment.
- Helping families establish a dental home: finding a dental provider, scheduling an appointment and all the difficult components of ensuring access to care.
- Advocating that community medical and dental professionals are providing oral health services to infants, toddlers, and pregnant women.
- Hosting a Cavity Free at Three training for local medical and dental providers. [Contact Cavity Free at Three](#) to learn more.

2. Is it recommended to use fluoridated water to prepare infant formula from birth? Our community water is not fluoridated and providers prescribe fluoride drops at 6 months of age. Why are fluoride drops not recommended sooner than 6 months?

Preparing infant formula: Infant formula contains low levels of fluoride itself, so it is not necessary to use fluoridated water when preparing infant formula. For more recommendations on this visit the [CDC's website](#).

When preparing infant formula, it is recommended to use water that has been heated to at least 158 degrees F, regardless of the water source (tap, bottled, nursery, etc.) in order to kill potentially hazardous bacteria that may be present in the infant formula powder itself. For more information visit the [CDC website on Cronobacter](#) and formula preparation.

Why not start fluoride supplementation earlier than at 6 months of age:

If drinking water does not contain fluoride, your healthcare provider may recommend a prescribed amount of fluoride supplementation once the first tooth erupts, usually around 6 months of age. It is not recommended that fluoride supplementation occur prior to 6 months. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that you check with your healthcare provider to find out if any additional fluoride supplements are necessary, or if your child is receiving the right amount. Healthcare providers should be aware of the risks and benefits of various fluoride treatment options.

Fluoride is found commonly in many foods and tap water. Fluoride is important as it works to protect teeth and prevent tooth decay in a couple of ways:

1. During early infancy, when teeth are forming fluoride is deposited during enamel development and makes the tooth enamel stronger and less vulnerable to disease (caries).
2. Once teeth have erupted, fluoride remineralizes (aka re-strengthens) tooth surfaces. It is important to continue to strengthen teeth as they are exposed to acid throughout the day that "attacks" and weakens teeth.

For all children you should begin brushing their teeth as soon as they begin to come in by using fluoride toothpaste in an amount no more than a smear or the size of a grain of rice, and receive routine professional dental care.

3. We have seen a pediatrician who has been telling moms not to nurse at night since breast milk causes dental caries. My understanding is that breast milk does not cause cavities.

Breastfeeding should not be stopped at night in the hopes of preventing cavities. Breastfeeding is not associated with an increase in dental caries, rather exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months has been shown to improve dental alignment and overall oral health. When breastfeeding children over 12 months at night, there might be a slightly higher risk of cavities, but the research is not conclusive. After a night feeding, it is recommended to wipe the mouth or brush the teeth thoroughly before returning to bed or first thing in the morning after a night feeding.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and numerous medical organizations recommend all children breastfeed exclusively for 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding for at least one year or as long as both mom and child wish to continue, to receive numerous health benefits.