

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Q: How important is fluoride in dental health?

Fluoride is an important part of dental health and preventing cavities and tooth decay, especially for children. Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay by protecting the tooth enamel from damage by bacteria. Fluoride can be ingested, such as in drinking water, and is then incorporated into the teeth when they are developing. It can also be applied topically, both in fluoride applications at your dentist or doctor's office and in toothpaste used at home. Fluoride toothpaste is now recommended starting when infants get their first tooth, but should be used in tiny amounts (the size of a rice grain) in children who are too young to spit it out.

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