



GALLATIN VALLEY
**PEDIATRIC
DENTISTRY**

we care for your cubs

FLUORIDE

How does fluoride prevent cavities?

Fluoride strengthens the enamel, the outer layer of the tooth, which is most susceptible to decay. It also inhibits the growth of cavity-causing bacteria.

Is fluoride safe?

Fluoride has been scientifically proven to be safe and effective in preventing and reducing cavities. Its use and application should be monitored by parents and caregivers as overconsumption can be harmful. Excessive fluoride can lead to fluorosis, a condition that gives the teeth a "chalky white" appearance.

How much fluoride does my child need?

For children under 3 years, a small lentil-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste, applied to the toothbrush, will deliver an appropriate amount of fluoride. For children ages 3-6, a pea-size amount is recommended.

What is the topical fluoride treatment performed at check-ups?

Topical fluoride application is an important step completed after the teeth are cleaned by the dental staff. Once the teeth are thoroughly cleaned they are better able to accept the topical fluoride which helps strengthen the enamel surface. If the topical fluoride is not placed, the teeth are actually more vulnerable to decay for a short time following the dental cleaning.

Does everyone need fluoride?

Fluoride needs vary widely based on an individual's risk for cavities. Risk can be assessed at your child's dental appointment by our dentist and trained staff.

What is fluoride?

Fluoride occurs naturally as a compound in the earth's crust and ground water. It is derived from the element fluorine (which is element #9 on the Periodic Table of the Elements). As a public health measure, about 70% of the US has added an optimal amount of fluoride to the water supply, which can account for at least a 50% reduction in cavity rates in those communities. For example, the city of Bozeman has fluoride in the water supply but Belgrade does not.

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