



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Silver Diamine Fluoride Fact Sheet



WHAT IS SILVER DIAMINE FLUORIDE?

Silver diamine fluoride (SDF) is a liquid made up of fluoride and silver particles that is applied directly to cavities with a small brush. It stops cavities from growing by making the tooth harder and limiting the growth of the bacteria that cause tooth decay. SDF is used to stop cavities from getting worse, and help keep teeth healthy.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SDF?

SDF can help stop cavities from growing and getting worse, which will prevent or slow the need for more invasive treatments like fillings, crowns, or extractions (having teeth pulled). Most importantly, SDF can be used to prevent the need for dental treatment under sedation (under general anesthesia) for young children. The treatment is fast, easy and painless. SDF also relieves tooth sensitivity. Sometimes SDF is the only treatment needed if the cavities are very small, or if the treated baby teeth fall out as adult teeth come in.



IS SDF SAFE?

Yes! SDF has been approved by Health Canada since 2017, has been used in Japan for over 40 years, and in Australia and China for over 10 years. There have been no reported cases of major health risks or severe reactions to SDF. SDF does contain silver, however, so it should not be used for people with allergies to silver or ulcers in the mouth.



WHAT ARE OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS?

Other treatment options may include permanent or temporary fillings, crowns, or extractions. These treatments may require freezing or sedation (general anesthetic).

If a cavity is left untreated, it may continue to grow and cause pain and infection.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF SDF?

SDF is applied with a small brush and does not require any freezing or drilling. SDF will permanently stain tooth cavities black; however, healthy tooth structure will not stain. If SDF accidentally touches the lips or gums, it may leave a dark stain for up to 3 weeks. SDF needs to be reapplied 1-2 weeks after the first application, and twice again every 4-6 months for its effects to continue.

BEFORE TREATMENT



AFTER TREATMENT



Photos used with permission from Dr. Kavita Mathu-Muju

References

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