

Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF)

This liquid medication is used to slow or halt tooth decay on children. It can also help with treating tooth sensitivity. This medication is typically used for children that are apprehensive or unable to tolerate dental treatment. This can allow your dentist to postpone or even prevent dental treatment until your child is more willing and tolerant of it.

The dentist will apply the medication at three separate appointments over the course of a few months. A small amount of SDF is applied to the decayed tooth area and this area will be permanently stained black from the fluoride. Any healthy tooth structure will not be affected and will not stain. If the SDF is accidentally applied to the skin or gums, a brown or white stain may appear. It will cause no harm but cannot be washed off. It will disappear in one to three weeks. Tooth coloured fillings and crowns may discolour if SDF is applied to them.

After the application of SDF, eating and drinking is restricted for 60 minutes. You cannot brush your child's teeth until the following morning. Your child might mention a metallic taste. This will go away rapidly.

There is a risk that having this fluoride application will not stop the decay on your child's teeth. If this is the case, more treatment may be needed. This could include an additional SDF treatment, a filling or crown, or even root canal or tooth removal may still be needed. If no treatment is done, the decay will continue to break down the tooth causing the symptoms to get worse.

It is not advised to have SDF if your child has an allergy to silver or if they have any painful sores or raw areas on their gums or anywhere in their mouth.



Cavities along the gingiva before the application of SDF.



Cavities treated with SDF; temporary gingival staining.



Cavities in between central incisors before the application of SDF.



Cavities treated with SDF; the decay is halted.