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Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF)

*SDF may be an easy and affordable choice for your dental care
SDF facts for parents and caregivers for the elderly*

What is silver diamine fluoride (SDF) and is it safe?

- ✓ SDF is a liquid medicine that a dentist or dental hygienist will apply directly to a cavity to stop the cavity from developing and getting bigger. It is painless, but it does stain the tooth black where it is applied.
- ✓ SDF should not be used if the patient has an allergy to silver. Also, if there is soft tissue irritation, ulceration, gingivitis in the area, or if the tooth has symptoms of pulp infection, SDF cannot be used.

Does it work?

- ✓ SDF has been shown to stop the active decay of the tooth. It will not replace parts of the tooth already broken down, but it will prevent further loss of tooth structure.

When should it be used?

SDF use is indicated in child and adult patients to:

- ✓ Treat dentinal hypersensitivity.
- ✓ Quickly stop uncontrolled dental caries.
- ✓ Treat patients with high and extremely high caries risk status such as in early childhood caries, dry mouth, and methamphetamine use.
- ✓ Treat weak tooth structure, such as exposed root.
- ✓ Treat difficult to reach areas of teeth like in between back teeth.
- ✓ Treat people who do not get dental care because of poor health, fear, autism, or dementia.
- ✓ Treat very young children who need hospital-based dental care.
- ✓ Treat people who are frail due to medical complications or weakness.
- ✓ Treat people with limited or no access to dental care.
- ✓ Treat people with limited life expectancy who are hospitalized or are in a nursing home or hospice.

Does insurance pay for it?

- ✓ Many dental insurance plans pay for this service, but it is best to first check with your plan.

How many times can it be applied?

- ✓ For maximum benefit, SDF is generally suggested at six-month intervals for at least two years and maybe prolonged if the caries risk remains high or extremely high.

Resources

National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center (OHRC)

<https://www.mchoralhealth.org/highlights/silver-diamine-fluoride.php>

Illinois Department of Public Health

<https://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/illinois-department-public-health-sdf-8252020-update.pdf>