

stDental Times

March 02, 2020



Happy 2020! We are looking forward to another wonderful year serving you.

We have so much exciting news to share. We have successfully converted Fridays to caring for our recare patients only. It has been difficult to find the right dental hygienist when he/she is only here one day a week. After months of searching we now welcome AnnaLisa Ortiz, RDH and Susan Baldwin, RDH to our practice. You can learn more about them on our website <https://stdental.com/meet-the-team/>.

We are very thankful to have wonderful patients like you. Referring your friends and neighbors to us has been the biggest compliment you could pay us. In order to accommodate all the new patients that have been invited by you, we now have the option of two shorter appointment visits rather than one long appointment. The first visit, on a Friday, is for getting all the records needed for the full exam which will be scheduled for the following week.

We hope you find that little changes like these make your visit with us more convenient. Thank you!

Sincerely, Dr. Andrew Huang & Dr. Ann

Produced in-house by Santa Teresa Dental to improve your dental health and awareness

What is Fluoride and How is Fluoride Being Used?

The mineral **fluoride** occurs naturally on earth and is released from rocks into the soil, water, and air. All water contains some fluoride. Usually, the fluoride level in water is not enough to prevent tooth decay; however, some groundwater and natural springs can have naturally high levels of fluoride.

How does fluoride protect teeth?

Fluoride benefits both children and adults. Here's how:

Before teeth break through the gums, the fluoride taken in from foods, beverages and dietary supplements makes tooth enamel (the hard surface of the tooth) stronger, making it easier to resist tooth decay. This provides what is called a "systemic" benefit.

After teeth erupt, fluoride helps rebuild (remineralize) weakened tooth enamel and reverses early signs of tooth decay. When you brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste, or use other fluoride dental products, the fluoride is applied to the surface of your teeth. This provides what is called a "topical" benefit.

In addition, the fluoride you take in from foods and beverages continues to provide a topical benefit because it becomes part of your saliva, constantly bathing the teeth with tiny amounts of fluoride that help rebuild weakened tooth enamel.

How do fluorides act?

- They fortify the enamel so that it turns resistant to dental caries.
- It has a neutralizing effect on the acids produced by decay causing bacteria.
- One of the most important tooth-saving actions of fluoride is that it carries out the process of "remineralization". The decay-causing bacteria disintegrate the tooth structure by removing the mineral parts of teeth like calcium and phosphate ions. The job of fluoride is to hold them back together. This way the fluoride replenishes the lost ions and thereby remineralize the teeth.
- Owing to the antibacterial action, fluoride prevent the bacteria from colonizing the tooth surfaces.



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Fluoride

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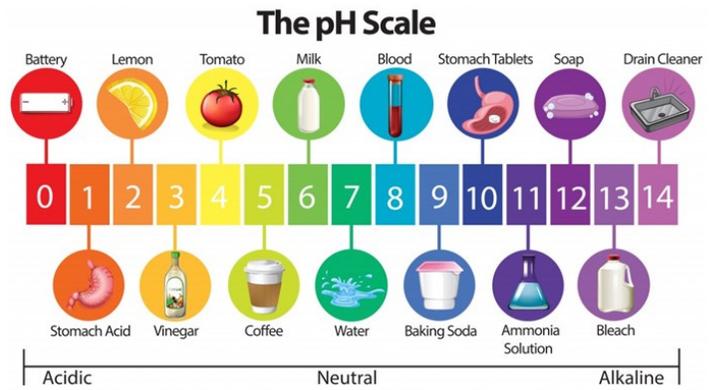
Apart from being used in routine cases, fluoride has proven to be highly beneficial when used in those who are wearing braces. The tooth surface underneath the wire components of the braces are areas of extensive bacterial activity as these areas are inaccessible to cleaning. Fluoride application, in such cases, gives remarkable results by guarding the teeth from undue bacterial activity.

What is pH?

pH is a measure of acidity or alkalinity. The lower the pH, the more acidic something is; and the higher the pH, the more alkaline something is. The pH scale goes from 1 to 14, 1 being the most acidic, 14 being the most alkaline, and 7 being neutral (like most water).

Why is pH important?

Many oral microorganisms require a pH around neutrality for growth and are sensitive to extreme changes in acid or alkali. The pH of most surfaces in the mouth is regulated by saliva, which has a mean unstimulated pH of 6.75-7.25. Optimal pH values for healthy bacterial growth will be provided by the areas of the mouth bathed by saliva. Shifts in the proportions of bacteria within the dental plaque from healthy to unhealthy occur following fluctuations in environmental pH. When we eat, the pH in plaque can fall rapidly to below pH 5.0 through the production of acids (predominately lactic acid) as the bacteria metabolize (eat) the ingested nutrients. Consuming acidic foods and drinks can likewise lower the pH within the mouth. Depending on the frequency (and the acidity) of food intake, the bacterial in plaque will be exposed to variety of episodic challenges of low pH.



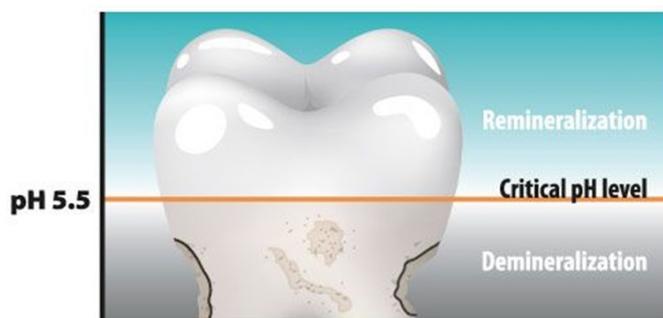
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Smile Show Case

Patient, Connie M., changed her smile by simply placing two porcelain crowns on her upper front teeth!



Fluoride

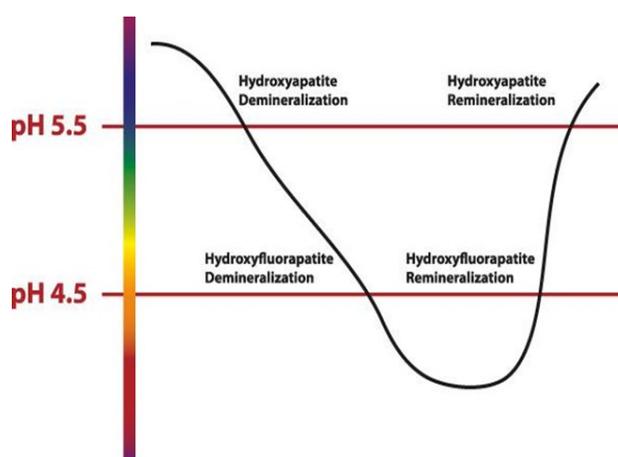


Many of the predominantly healthy bacteria within dental plaque (non-acid producers) can tolerate brief conditions of moderately low pH but are inhibited or killed by more frequent or prolonged exposures to acidic conditions. If one's mouth experiences dramatic or long-lasting periods of low pH, this can result in the enhanced growth of, or colonization by, aciduric and acidogenic (cavity-causing) bacteria.

For this discussion, a pH of 5.5 is an important pH level for teeth as the teeth begin to dissolve or demineralize. At a pH above 5.5, the teeth begin to remineralize.

Fluoride in action in technical scientific term

Tooth structure is primarily made up of the mineral hydroxyapatite, which demineralizes when the oral pH drops at or below 5.5. When the teeth are under an acid attack and fluoride is present during the remineralization process, hydroxyapatite particles combine with fluoride to form fluorapatite within the tooth structure. Fluorapatite is more resistant to acid attacks than hydroxyapatite as it does not begin to dissolve or demineralize until the pH drops to or below 4.5. In the window of pH 4.5 – 5.5, hydroxyapatite is dissolving in enamel and fluorapatite is forming. As the pH cycles in a healthy balance in the mouth, in the presence of fluoride, this window of pH accounts for maturation of the enamel, making it stronger and more decay resistant.



How do I get fluoride?

Drink water with fluoride. Fluoride is naturally found in most all water sources, rivers, lakes, wells and even the oceans. For the past 70 years, fluoride has been added to public water supplies to bring fluoride levels up to the amount necessary to help prevent tooth decay. If your community is not fluoridated such as Morgan Hill, your family can elect to purchase fluoridated water (amount of fluoride added may not always be at optimal level of 0.7 parts per million) from retail stores.

Use Toothpaste and Mouthrinse with Fluoride. Toothpaste with fluoride has been responsible for a significant drop in cavities since 1960. Look for one with the ADA Seal of Acceptance to make sure it contains fluoride.

- **Brush twice a day** (morning and night) or as directed by Dr. Huang or Dr. Ann.
- For children younger than 3 years, start brushing their teeth as soon as they start to appear in the mouth by using fluoride toothpaste in an amount no more than a smear or the size of a grain of rice.
- For children 3 to 6 years old, use no more than a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.

Here are some badges of honor in the recent years that our patients have bestowed upon us. Thank you!



"People Love Us On Yelp" 2013 - 2018

Share a Smile

New Patients Are
Always Welcome!

*The finest compliment we can ever
receive is a referral from our friends and
patients.*

Santa Teresa

DENTAL

Family • Cosmetic • Sedation • Invisalign

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Dental
Assistant

Fluoride

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- Always supervise your child's brushing to make sure they use the right amount and try to get your child to spit out most of the toothpaste.
- Mouthwash with fluoride can help make your teeth more resistant to decay, but children six years or younger should not use it unless it's been recommended by Dr. Huang or Dr. Ann. Many children younger than 6 are more likely to swallow it than spit it out because their swallowing reflexes aren't fully developed.

Visit Your Dentist for a Professional Application. If you have a good chance of getting cavities, Dr. Huang and Dr. Ann can apply fluoride directly to your teeth during your dental visit with a gel.

Take a Fluoride Supplement. Available by prescription only, fluoride supplements come in tablet, drop or lozenge forms. They are recommended only for children ages six months to 16 years living in areas without adequate amounts of fluoride in their community drinking water and who are at high risk of developing cavities.

What about the claims that fluoride is harmful?

Since the inception of the community water fluoridation effort, effects of fluoride in humans has undergone a nearly continuous process of re-evaluation. The consensus of the scientific community is that water fluoridation, at the level recommended to prevent tooth decay, safely provides oral health benefits which in turn supports improved general health. Topical fluoride applications such as ones in toothpaste, mouthwash, and applied in dental offices are also proven to be safe and effective at cavity prevention.

How about dental fluorosis?

Dental fluorosis is the appearance of faint white lines or streaks on the teeth that only occurs when younger children consume too much fluoride, from any source, over long periods when teeth are developing under the gums. Once teeth break through the gums, you cannot develop fluorosis.



Fluorosis isn't a disease and doesn't affect the health of your teeth. In most cases, the effect is so subtle that only Dr. Huang or Dr. Ann would notice it during an examination. The type of fluorosis found in the United States has no effect on tooth function and may make the teeth more resistant to decay.

The chance of developing fluorosis exists until about age eight because teeth are still forming under the gums. Ultimately, **getting the right amount of fluoride is best**—not too much and not too little.

Talk to Dr. Huang and Dr. Ann about you and your child's specific fluoride needs.