

Roughly three out of four Americans follow the advice of the American Dental Association (ADA)¹ to brush their teeth twice daily, for two minutes.

That's a good preventive measure for adults. But you may be wondering: "How can I, as a parent, safeguard my child's dental care from the start?"

Good news: it's just what adults use: **fluoride**.

Fluoride² is used in two forms:

- topical fluorides, found in toothpastes, mouth rinses, and fluoride treatments you receive in dental offices
- systemic fluorides, minerals ingested in drinking water or dietary fluoride supplements.



Just remember: a little of this can go a long way with kids. Infants and young children who ingest too much fluoride may develop enamel fluorosis,³ a cosmetic condition characterized by white or brown streaks in the tooth enamel.

So, how much fluoride should you use with infants and toddlers—and when should you start them using it?

- The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) guidelines state that for children younger than age 2, you can use a smear of toothpaste,⁴ or just enough that the tips of the toothbrush bristles have toothpaste on them, and the toothpaste does not penetrate the bristles.
- Once children reach age 2, a pea-sized dab can be used.
- Be sure to check with your child's dentist regarding any questions you may have regarding the use of fluoride.

Whether it's to keep your mouth healthy—or even just to maintain an attractive smile or fresh breath—you know by now the importance of brushing your teeth daily with fluoride. Knowing when and how to start your child⁵ in the same direction will pay off for them later in life.

Sources:

¹ <https://www.ada.org/resources/research/science-and-research-institute/oral-health-topics/fluoride-topical-and-systemic-supplements>

² <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/f/fluoride>

³ <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/f/fluorosis>

⁴ <https://www.deltadentalnj.com/learn-about-oral-health/kids-club/articles/entry/2019/when%20can%20a%20child%20use%20regular%20toothpaste>

⁵ <https://www.deltadentalnj.com/blog/entry/2021/dental%20care%20timeline%20for%20infants%20children>