

# Facts about FLUORIDE

**Fluoride** is a mineral found naturally in our groundwater. It can also be found in food, drinking water, toothpaste and in the fluoride treatments that an oral health professional applies to your teeth.

Fluoride strengthens tooth surfaces by making the outer layer of teeth (enamel) stronger. It has been proven to prevent tooth decay.

Over 90 national and international professional health organizations support the use of fluoride to help prevent dental cavities, including Health Canada and the Canadian Dental Association.

## When should my child brush with fluoride toothpaste?

Brush twice a day, especially at bedtime.

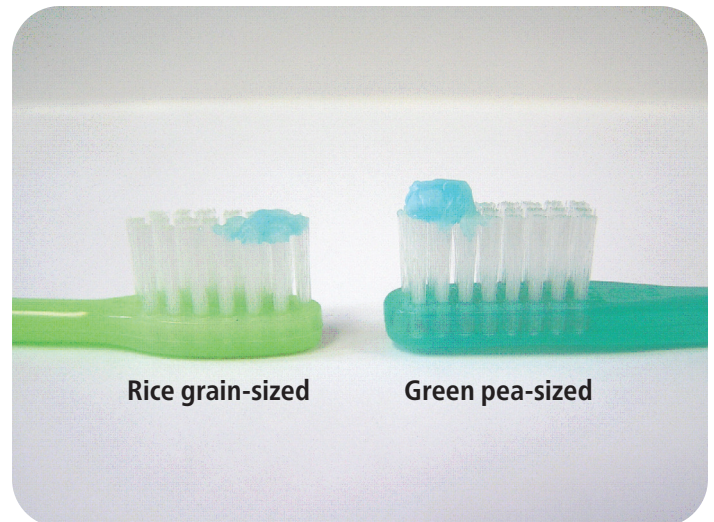
Children under three years of age should use only water or a rice grain-sized amount of non-fluoridated toothpaste unless recommended differently by your oral health professional.

Children three years of age and older should use a green pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste.

Children up to six years of age are not able to brush their teeth properly, so you will have to do it for them. Let them have a turn brushing when you are done.

Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste and to rinse well after brushing.

All children should visit an oral health professional regularly, beginning with the first dental visit by their first birthday. This is a good time to discuss specific fluoride recommendations for your child.





## What is dental fluorosis?

Fluorosis looks like chalky white or light brown spots on the teeth. These marks do not affect how your teeth help you to bite, chew or speak. Fluorosis happens when too much fluoride is swallowed while the adult teeth are being formed, between birth and eight years of age.

## Should my child receive fluoride supplements or mouth rinse?

Fluoride supplements, like chewable tablets, lozenges or drops are not generally recommended for Canadians because we get sufficient fluoride from other sources. However, your oral health professional might recommend fluoride supplements if your child is at higher risk for developing cavities.

Use of a fluoride mouth rinse is not recommended for children under six years of age as they may swallow significant amounts of the rinse. Please consult your oral health professional before using fluoride rinses for children over six years of age.

## Community water fluoridation in York Region

Fluoride levels vary throughout the Region depending on the drinking water source.

Water sampling shows that all sources are safe and well below the maximum acceptable concentration of fluoride 1.5 parts per million (ppm). The optimal level of fluoride is between 0.6 to 0.8 ppm.

- The Cities of Markham and Vaughan, the Town of Richmond Hill and the Township of King are supplied with fluoridated water through connection to the Region of Peel's and City of Toronto's water systems.
- The Town of Georgina currently receives fluoridated drinking water.
- Mixed surface and groundwater supplies serve the Towns of Aurora, Newmarket, Whitchurch-Stouffville and parts of East Gwillimbury. Mixing the sources of water results in drinking water that is below the optimal 0.6 to 0.8 ppm fluoride concentration. Residents can ask their oral health professional for recommendations on fluoride at their next dental visit.

Fluoride levels are continuously monitored at all water treatment plants to ensure that the requirements of the Province of Ontario are met.

For more information about fluoridated water in York Region visit [york.ca/water](http://york.ca/water)

To speak with the York Region Public Health Dental Program, call **1-800-735-6625** or visit [york.ca/dental](http://york.ca/dental) for more information.



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