

Silver diammine fluoride information sheet

Silver diammine fluoride (SDF) is an antibiotic liquid. It is used on decayed baby teeth to treat tooth sensitivity and it can also help to stop tooth decay. It is most effective when applied twice yearly. However, treatment with SDF does not remove the need for regular dental checks, fillings or crowns to repair function or aesthetics.

The procedure: **1)** Drying the affected area, **2)** Placing a small amount of SDF on the affected area, **3)** Allowing SDF to dry for one minute, **4)** Rinsing with water.

Your child's teeth should not be treated with SDF if they:

- 1) are allergic to silver
- 2) have painful gums or sores in their mouth.

Advantages of SDF

- ✓ Relieves tooth sensitivity.
- ✓ Prevents abscesses by slowing down or stopping tooth decay.
- ✓ Can buy time for children who are too young or fearful, or who have special needs, until they can manage.
- ✓ Avoids fillings or extractions by stopping decay.

Disadvantages of SDF

- * The painted area will stain black permanently. Healthy parts of teeth will not stain. However, stained tooth may be covered with a filling or a crown to make it look white again.
- * Tooth-coloured fillings may discolour if SDF is applied to them but this can usually be polished off to make them white again.
- * If accidentally applied to the skin or gum, a brown stain may appear. Although this cannot be washed off, it causes no harm and will disappear in 1-3 weeks.
- * If accidentally spilled on clothes, it can leave a stain that does not come out.
- * A metallic taste may be noticed during the application. This will go away rapidly.

Before SDF



After SDF



Alternatives to SDF to discuss with your child's dentist (not limited to the following):

- * No treatment, which may lead to continued deterioration of tooth structures and cosmetic appearance. Symptoms may increase in severity.
- * Depending on the location, extent of the tooth decay and your child's ability to cooperate, other treatment options may include a filling, a silver crown, or an extraction.

If SDF is being used to stop tooth decay, sometimes the decay will still progress. If this happens, the tooth may require further treatment, such as reapplication of SDF, placement of a filling or a crown or extraction.