



THE CANADIAN DENTAL  
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

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## 2. How fluoride works

Tooth decay results from the effects of acids on the minerals in your tooth enamel. These acids are produced by bacteria in the mouth and literally dissolve the minerals right out of your teeth.

Not only does fluoride protect your teeth from the damage caused by acids, but it also stops bacteria from producing the harmful acids in the first place. In addition, it helps your body replace the minerals in your teeth, repairing the damage the acids have done. And with children, the right amount of fluoride helps their enamel mature.



*Made possible through an  
educational grant from Crest.*

## 3. But is it good for me and my family?

Many scientific studies over several decades show that water fluoridation is good for oral health. As a result, Health Canada recognizes fluoride as a beneficial substance that helps prevent tooth decay.

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) also considers fluoride use to be important for oral health and disease prevention. The CDHA recommends that everyone should brush with a fluoride-containing toothpaste at least twice each day.

YOUR PREVENTION PROFESSIONAL

# Fluoride:

## A Natural Contribution To Your Dental Health



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## 1. Fighting tooth decay, naturally

Fluoride occurs naturally in rocks and soil and is among the most abundant substances in the earth's crust. As a result, it's often found in a dissolved form in lakes, rivers and groundwater. Because fluoride is so common, and because human activities such as manufacturing release it into the air, all vegetation and almost all foods contain traces of it.



As early as the 1930s, scientists noticed that people who drank naturally fluoridated water had less tooth decay than people who didn't. They soon realized that fluoride might be nature's answer to tooth decay, and more research in the 1940s and 1950s showed that it could contribute greatly to dental health.

As a result, many communities in Canada and the United States began to add fluoride to their drinking water. Manufacturers of dental care products also started putting it into toothpastes, rinses, gels and varnishes. Dietary supplements like fluoride lozenges also became available. With these products, fluoride is available to everyone, even when their water doesn't contain it.

## 4. Using fluoride wisely

While fluoride is generally good for oral health, too much can cause a problem called dental fluorosis.

This happens when too much fluoride affects tooth development by interfering with the mineralization of the enamel. Mild fluorosis affects the enamel's outer layer, producing white lines across its surface. With severe fluorosis, the enamel becomes porous, which can result in tooth sensitivity or pain. This, in turn, can lead to other problems. For example, if tooth sensitivity is severe and chewing properly becomes difficult, proper nutrition can become an issue.

Because of this, the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association discourages the over-use of fluorides by children and recommends the following:

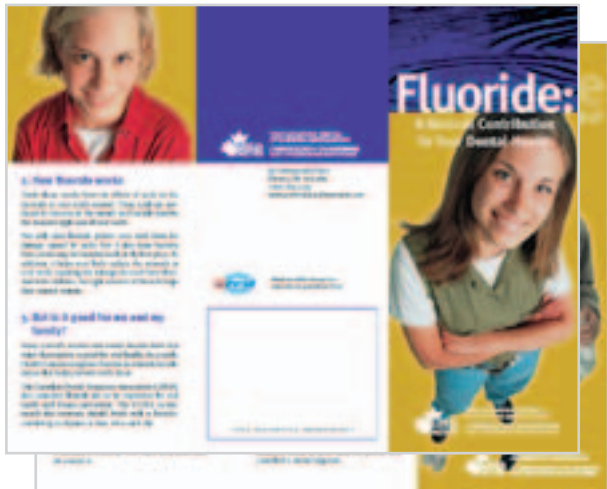
- Infants past the age of 12 months shouldn't be fed with formula made with fluoridated water.
- Children under six can get unneeded fluoride through accidental swallowing of toothpaste, so parents should supervise them to make sure they put only a thin smear of toothpaste on the brush. For the same reason, they shouldn't be given self-applied fluoridated rinses.
- Before children receive fluoride supplements such as lozenges, their parents should consult with a dental hygienist to obtain an individualized assessment of tooth decay, oral health and exposure to all sources of fluoride.
- Children over six, if they're at high risk for tooth decay, may require a supplement of 1 mg/day, but only if the water supply is not fluoridated, or is fluoridated at less than 0.3 parts per million (ppm). Again, no supplements should be given until the parents have consulted a dental hygienist.

# USING Fluoride WISELY



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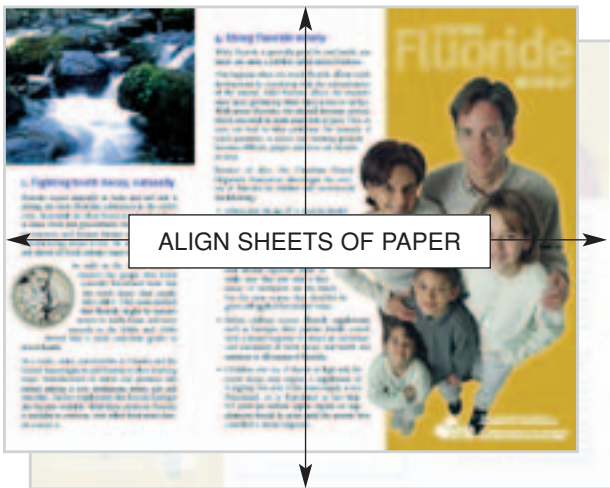
# Pamphlet folding instructions



1. Print “page 1” and “page 2” back to back on your printer.



2. Pre-fold “page 1” and “page 2” on the dotted lines.



3. If you printed two separate pages, align “page 1” with “page 2.” Butt the blank sides of the pages together.



4. Fold over the right-hand panel to the dotted line.



5. Fold over the left-hand panel to the edge of the pamphlet.