

Eggert Family Dentistry

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Fluoride Treatments for Adults Too?

For over five decades, the American Dental Association has continuously endorsed the fluoridation of community water supplies and the use of fluoride-containing products as safe and effective measures for preventing tooth decay.

Over the last few years, it has become clear that the constant supply of the appropriate levels of fluoride in the mouth is the most important factor in the remineralization of tooth enamel. Remineralization is an important way for a tooth to fight the early stages of the decay process in which the decay-causing bacteria “eat away” (or demineralize) the tooth’s enamel.

It used to be thought that fluoride was most important during tooth development, so these new findings are of profound importance with regard to the use of fluoride as a preventive or therapeutic measure.

So, how can you be sure that you are getting an adequate amount of fluoride? If you live in a house that is hooked up to a city’s water supply and you are using this water for drinking, cooking, and brushing your teeth, then you are on the right track. If you have well water, or if you drink a lot of bottled or filtered water, you may want to consider fluoride supplementation.

The problem with bottled water is that there is no easy way to determine if there is any fluoride in the water. Many bottled waters come from manufacturing plants where the water has been extra-filtered and purified, most likely removing any fluoride. Reverse-osmosis filtration systems and some other filters will also take fluoride out of water. Most carbon-based filters, like Brita and Pur, however, will not filter out fluoride.

There are many products that can be used for fluoride supplementation. In addition to fluoride containing toothpastes, fluoride mouth rinses can be found over-the-counter in the oral health care aisle of your favorite retail store. These mouth rinses can be used on a daily basis for most people over the age of six.

For individuals at-risk for dental decay (most children under the age of 18 and adults that have had decay diagnosed within the last year) there are professionally applied fluoride products that we can place on your teeth at your recall visits. As our standard operating procedure, we do fluoride treatments for children 18 years and under once per year. There are some children who would benefit from fluoride treatments at every six-month visit, specifically those undergoing orthodontic treatment, those with poor oral hygiene, and those who have had decay diagnosed within the last year. We are happy to do these extra fluoride treatments upon parent request.

Adults can benefit from fluoride treatments too! If you would like a fluoride treatment during your recall visit, please let us know, we are happy to accommodate. Some insurance plans even provide benefits for fluoride treatments for adults (check with your specific plan for details). Keep in mind that even if your plan doesn’t provide benefits for fluoride treatments, the money you invest can prevent cavities in the future.