

## Community Dental Network

### Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF) liquid treatment



# What is Silver Diamine Fluoride liquid?

Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF) is a clear liquid used to stop tooth decay.

It contains silver and fluoride which work together to stop decay progressing further.

It has a temporary metallic taste when it is being painted onto teeth.

## Is SDF suitable for children?

SDF cannot be used if your child has:

- An allergy to silver, other heavy metals or a component of SDF
- Painful gums, ulcers or sores in their mouth.

Please tell the dentist if any of the above apply to your child.

Your written consent will be required before the treatment can start.

## How is SDF applied?

- The dentist will apply petroleum jelly (or an alternative) to your child's lips and gums to protect them.
- Cotton wool will be placed next to their teeth.
- The teeth will then be dried.
- SDF liquid will be painted onto the decayed teeth for one to three minutes.
- The teeth will be dried a second time.

Sometimes the dentist may place a filling over the top of the teeth being treated.

## How many appointments are required

The treatment can be carried out during one appointment.

A further appointment may be required after two or three weeks; this is to check your child's teeth and to apply more SDF liquid if needed. The dentist will let you know if this is required.

SDF liquid is usually reapplied every six months.

## **What are the benefits of SDF liquid?**

SDF liquid, together with improved oral hygiene and a change in diet, can save teeth and reduce the risk of toothache or infection.

- It is a simple procedure – it reduces sensitivity and slows down or stops tooth decay.
- It can be more effective than fluoride varnish.
- It can stop decay getting worse until your child is ready for further dental treatment.

## **Are there any disadvantages?**

It permanently discolors the decayed area of the tooth black; healthy parts of the tooth do not discolour.

It can temporarily stain the skin, lips, gums, and cheeks brown or white; this will disappear after one to three weeks.

It can discolor tooth-coloured fillings - polishing these fillings can help to remove the stain but it may stay visible at the join between the tooth and the filling.

If the SDF liquid is accidentally spilt, it can leave a stain on clothes that does not come out.

## **Are there any alternatives?**

The dentist will discuss with you which option is best for your child, such as:

- Keeping the tooth under review but it is likely to get worse
- Applying fluoride varnish
- Filling the tooth
- Placing a silver cap/crown on the affected tooth
- Removing the tooth.

If you have any questions, please contact the dentist by telephone or ask at your child's appointment

## **What else do I need to know?**

SDF is fully licensed in many countries around the world where it has been safely used for many years.

In the United Kingdom, it is licensed for treating sensitivity only and has not been widely used until recently. It can be used for decay “off-label” and is being more widely recommended.

If the SDF does not stop the decay progressing, other treatments may be required, such as tooth removal.

It is vital to maintain good tooth brushing habits and to keep sugary food and drinks to mealtimes to stop decay getting worse or developing in other teeth.

## Further information

For fun videos:

[www.bspd.co.uk/Kidsvids](http://www.bspd.co.uk/Kidsvids)

For advice on toothbrushing and diet:

[www.bspd.co.uk/Patients](http://www.bspd.co.uk/Patients)

[www.dentalhealth.org/childrens-teeth](http://www.dentalhealth.org/childrens-teeth)

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/)

For a music-based app to make tooth brushing fun: [www.brushdj.com](http://www.brushdj.com)

SDF liquid treatment adapted from a publication of the same name from The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry.

**For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.**