

# Pediatricians offer new dental recommendations

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American Academy of Pediatrics urges fluoride use on first teeth to prevent decay.

(HealthDay)—All children should start using toothpaste with fluoride when their teeth appear, regardless of their risk level for cavities, according to new recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Up until age 3, children should use a smear (the size of a grain of rice) of toothpaste. After age 3, a pea-sized amount may be used. Parents should put the [toothpaste](#) on young children's toothbrushes and supervise and help them with brushing.

Beginning at the time teeth appear, fluoride varnish should be applied by doctors or dentists every 3 to 6 months, according to the AAP.

Over-the-counter fluoride rinses are not recommended for children younger than 6 years, due to the risk that they may swallow more than the recommended levels of fluoride, the experts explained.

Dr. Melinda Clark, along with colleagues at the AAP's Section on Oral Health, published the new recommendations online Aug. 25 in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in American children, and fluoride is effective in preventing cavities in children, the AAP said.

**More information:** The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [child dental health](#).

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