

# Dentists' group expands recommended use of fluoride toothpaste for kids

February 11 2014

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They should use an amount the size of a grain of rice as soon as first tooth appears, ADA says.

(HealthDay)—Children should begin using toothpaste with fluoride as soon as they get their first tooth, according to updated American Dental Association (ADA) guidelines.

To help prevent cavities, parents should use a smear (an amount about the size of a grain of rice) of fluoride toothpaste for children younger than 3 years old and a pea-sized dab for those aged 3 to 6, the association recommends.

Previous guidelines recommended using water to brush the teeth of children younger than age 2 and brushing the teeth of children aged 2 to 6 with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.

"For half a century, the ADA has recommended that patients use fluoride toothpaste to prevent cavities, and a review of scientific research shows that this holds true for all ages," Dr. Edmond Truelove, chairman of the ADA's Council on Scientific Affairs, said in an association news release.

"Approximately 25 percent of children have or had cavities before entering kindergarten, so it's important to provide guidance to caregivers on the appropriate use of [fluoride toothpaste](#) to help prevent their children from developing cavities," Truelove said.

The ADA said the updated guidelines are meant to help prevent cavities in children while limiting their risk of fluorosis, which is a mild discoloration of the teeth.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease in the United States, and more than 16 million American [children](#) have untreated [cavities](#), according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The new recommendations appear in the February issue of *The Journal of the American Dental Association*.

**More information:** The American Academy of Pediatrics has more about [children's oral health](#).

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Citation: Dentists' group expands recommended use of fluoride toothpaste for kids (2014, February 11) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-02-dentists-group-fluoride-toothpaste-kids.html>

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