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1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Water Fluoridation Basics," web.



Fighting  
Tooth Decay  
With Fluoride

## What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a mineral found in nature. It is in some foods and water supplies. **Children who drink tap water with fluoride and get fluoride treatments from their doctor and dentist are less likely to get cavities.**

Fluoride helps fight tooth decay and cavities by making tooth enamel stronger. This means getting a healthy dose of fluoride can help protect and build your teeth.



## Fluoride is your friend!

The health benefits of fluoride include having:

- Fewer cavities
- Less severe cavities
- Less tooth loss
- Less pain because of tooth decay



**While fluoride in your tap water is the most common way to get your healthy dose of fluoride, it isn't the only way.**

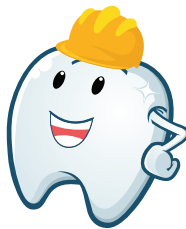


## How does fluoride work?



When you eat, the bacteria inside your mouth help break down the food, but they also produce acids that can attack tooth enamel. This leads to cavities. Fluoride helps create a shield to protect your teeth.

**Teeth can also repair themselves thanks to fluoride. When teeth are damaged by acids in the mouth, fluoride steps in and helps tooth enamel regain the minerals it has lost.**



Fluoride helps throughout your life. For children younger than 8, fluoride helps make permanent teeth stronger, even while they are still under the gums. For adults, fluoride keeps teeth strong and healthy.<sup>1</sup>

## Other ways to get fluoride:



Fluoride can also be found in meat, fish, eggs, and tea leaves.

If your tap water isn't fluoridated, you can get bottled water with fluoride in it.

Brush with fluoride toothpaste twice a day. Some other dental products, like mouthwashes, may contain fluoride.



**Fluoride treatments can be done by your dentist. They are easy and painless and create a shield on teeth. This helps to stop damage from acids created by food and drink.**

