

Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF)

What is SDF?

Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF) is a liquid medicine applied to teeth to treat dental decay and reduce tooth sensitivity. It contains silver, which acts as an antimicrobial agent to kill bacteria, and fluoride, which helps prevent further demineralisation (softening) of the tooth structure. When SDF is applied to the teeth, it forms silver oxide, which causes permanent black staining on areas of decay. Cavities that trap food may still require treatment to restore function (e.g. chewing).

Benefits of SDF

- **Non-invasive:** No injections or drills
- **Quick and easy:** Completed in a few minutes
- **Comfortable:** Most feel no discomfort
- **Effective:** Proven to stop or slow decay

What happens during SDF treatment?

Preparation: The affected tooth is cleaned and dried and Vaseline or cocoa butter is applied to the surrounding gums to help prevent staining and irritation.

Application: A small brush is used to apply the SDF liquid to the decayed tooth surface- the solution is left to dry for 1-3 minutes.

Aftercare: No eating or drinking for one hour after application. Over the next few days, the area where SDF has been applied will turn black. This is a positive sign, indicating that the medicine is working.

What happens after SDF is placed?

- **Discoloration:** Treated teeth will turn dark grey or black.
- **Taste:** Children may experience a metallic or bitter taste.
- **Gum irritation:** Occasionally, gums may become irritated and can also sometimes stain grey or black but this disappears after 1-3 weeks.
- **SDF teeth will be reviewed** and SDF will be generally be reapplied within 6 months for optimum results.

Alternatives to SDF

No treatment - The tooth decay will likely get worse
Depending on where the decay is and how much tooth is left options can include fluoride treatment, filling, crown, root canal/pulpotomy or extraction.

Is SDF Right for My Child?

Please advise your clinician if your child has an allergy or sensitivity to silver and/or ammonia.

If your child's age, special considerations, or dental anxiety make it difficult for them to tolerate a filling or crown, SDF provides an alternative option. SDF can also be used to stabilise decay while awaiting hospital care under general anaesthesia.

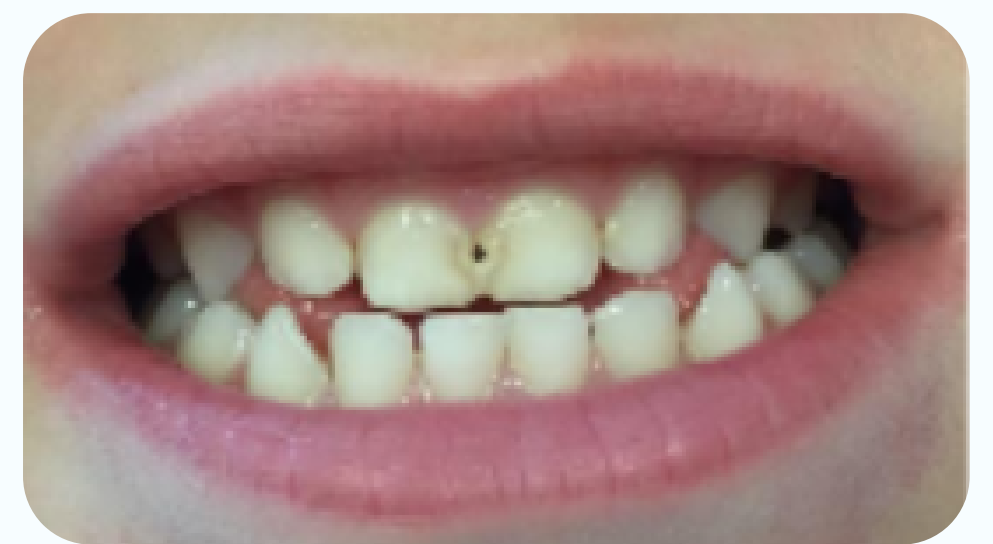
Cavity in a tooth



Cavity treated with SDF



Cavities in front baby teeth



Cavities treated with SDF



For information about free dental care for under 18s visit: www.HealthNZ.govt.nz/BeeHealthy or call: 0800 TALK TEETH (825 583)