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## Good oral health starts early

Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases. Even the tiniest teeth can decay. The good news is there are ways to prevent it.

**Humana Healthy Horizons** in Kentucky

Healthy gums and teeth are important to your child's overall health. This is why your child's doctor will talk with you about good dental habits even before your child's first tooth appears.



### Fluoride varnish: What parents need to know

Fluoride varnish is a dental treatment that can help prevent tooth decay, slow it down, or stop it from getting worse. Fluoride varnish is made with fluoride, a mineral that can strengthen tooth enamel (the outer coating on teeth).

When your baby is about 6 months old, your pediatrician will start to do oral health checkups. Once your child has a tooth, their doctor may recommend that they get fluoride varnish treatments to help prevent tooth decay. This can be done 2 to 4 times per year in the doctor's office. The number of treatments depends on how likely it is that your child may get a cavity.

All infants and children should have fluoride varnish every 6 months until age 5. Children who are at higher risk of tooth decay might need it every 3 months.

Varnish is used to help prevent or slow down tooth decay. It is applied on the top and sides of each tooth and hardens quickly. It is safe and does not hurt.

Pediatricians are trained to give oral health guidance to families and apply fluoride varnish to prevent disease.



**Be sure to talk with your child's doctor about scheduling an oral health checkup and fluoride varnish.**