

# Silver Diamine Fluoride



Maybe you have heard about this dental service and wonder if it is right for you or your children. To learn more, keep reading!

## What is SDF and why does it work?

Silver diamine fluoride (SDF) is a topical medication used to slow down or stop dental decay in both primary and permanent teeth.

SDF is a colorless liquid that contains both silver and fluoride. Silver's antibacterial properties are well known, as is fluoride's ability to remineralize damaged tooth enamel. Together, these two products can be used to stop the progression of tooth decay and stabilize the tooth until such time that the dentist determines further dental treatment is needed.

When applied to a tooth with a cavity, SDF hardens the softened tooth structure, turning the damaged portion of the tooth black in color. Further, through a halo effect of silver's antibacterial properties, adjacent teeth may receive some anti-cavity protection. Best practices for the use of SDF are under study, and though success rates are high, they are not 100%. Regular follow up is important, not only to determine if SDF retreatment is needed, but also to assess if additional or alternative dental treatment is required.



## When is SDF used?

SDF is a conservative approach to managing dental decay and can be used on teeth where there is no pain or discomfort. It is particularly useful for providing dental care to individuals who present challenges to receiving traditional treatment because of their age, behavioral issues, or medical conditions. As with all dental conditions, the decision as to the best treatment approach and the risks, benefits, and alternatives of all options is made in consultation with your dentist.

## Are there side effects with SDF?

SDF is a very safe product and adverse effects are rare. However, it leaves a black stain wherever it touches, so tissues in the mouth may be stained during SDF use. Additionally, it may cause irritation if it touches fragile oral tissues. Both of these effects are temporary.

If you think you or a family member may have dental decay and think SDF may be an option for you, talk with your CDA member dentist to learn more!