

# Brush-On Fluoride Instructions for Patients with Dry Mouth

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## **Why is my mouth dry and how does it impact my teeth?**

Dry mouth is common during and following radiation therapy to the head and neck area, total body irradiation, chronic graft vs. host disease, with use of some medications and for patients with medical conditions that affect the salivary glands. Dry mouth may lead to sensitivity of your teeth and higher risk for decay, even with proper brushing. In order to help you prevent dental decay, your dentist may prescribe you a prescription-strength fluoride toothpaste which may be more effective than over-the-counter toothpaste when used appropriately.

## **How often do I need to brush my teeth with fluoride?**

Brush your teeth with fluoride-containing toothpaste at least twice per day.

- You may alternate between over-the-counter fluoride-containing toothpaste and prescription toothpaste with higher fluoride concentration, but make sure to use the prescription fluoride **at least once per day**.
- The best time to use prescription fluoride is at bedtime as the last thing you do before you go to sleep.

## **How do I use the brush on fluoride-containing toothpaste?**

1. In order for the fluoride to reach all surfaces of the teeth, remove all plaque and food debris from the front and back surfaces of teeth using a wet, soft-bristled toothbrush. Remove all plaque and food debris between the teeth using floss unless your blood counts are low and/or you have been instructed not to floss by your medical or dental provider.

2. Place a thin ribbon of your fluoride-containing toothpaste onto your soft-bristled toothbrush. Gently brush the fluoride into all surfaces of the teeth for two minutes, especially where the tooth meets the gum tissue.
3. Spit out excess fluoride. **Do not rinse the mouth, drink, or eat anything for at least 30 minutes after fluoride use.**

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