

**Health Fairs: Fluoride Varnish Guidance and Protocol
Guidance for Students and Faculty Preceptors**

Published By	Associate Dean for Education
Effective from/last reviewed	April 17, 2018
Responsible for review	Associate Dean for Education
Relationship to other policies or guidance	UCSF Health Fair Participation https://studentlife.ucsf.edu/health-fair-participation
Approved by	Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs

Assembly Bill 667 allows anyone working in a public health setting to apply fluoride varnish (or other topical fluoride) in accordance with a prescription and protocol established by a dentist or physician. All dental and medical professionals, as well as non-healthcare individuals such as teachers, parents, Promotoras, and community health workers can apply varnish.

The California Dental Association States: *“The supervising dentist or physician has the authority to prescribe how varnish will be applied and by whom. Non-healthcare providers will only be utilized if they are available and if the supervising dentist/physician is comfortable utilizing them. It is the responsibility of the dentist/physician prescribing fluoride to ensure that those applying it are trained and understand the protocol.”*

Fluoride varnish is one of the best options for increasing the availability of topical fluoride, regardless of the levels of fluoride in the water supply. High quality evidence of the caries-preventive effectiveness of fluoride varnish in both permanent and primary dentitions is available and has been updated recently. A number of systematic reviews conclude that applications two or more times a year produce a mean reduction in caries increment of 37% in the primary dentition and 43% in the permanent dentition.

The evidence supports the view that varnish application can also arrest existing lesions on the smooth surfaces of primary teeth and roots of permanent teeth. Much of the evidence of effectiveness is derived from studies which have used sodium fluoride 22,600ppm varnish for application.

Fluoride varnish for use as a topical treatment has a number of practical advantages. It is well accepted and considered to be safe. Further, the application of fluoride varnish is simple and requires minimal training. While a thorough prophylaxis is not essential prior to application, removal of gross plaque is indicated (see important guidance).

Fluoride Varnish Protocol

Care should be used to ensure that only a small quantity of varnish is applied to teeth, particularly for young children. Teeth should be dried with cotton wool rolls (or a triple syringe). The varnish should be carefully applied to primary and permanent teeth and to any carious lesions. The individual should be advised about eating, drinking, brushing and flossing in accordance with product guidance.

The use of Duraphat™ is contraindicated in individuals with ulcerative gingivitis and stomatitis. There is a very small risk of allergy to one component of Duraphat™ (colophony), so for children who have a history of allergic episodes requiring hospital admission, including asthma, varnish application is contraindicated. Duraphat™ contains 33.8% volume of ethanol, it is recommended to avoid its use in pregnant or lactating women and/or any individual for which alcohol is contraindicated. Other brands of varnish may have different constituents.

Important Guidance for Students and Faculty:

- Any student (D1-D4), working in accordance with the above, can provide fluoride varnish at a health fair.

- Only final year dental students are permitted to perform the act of dentistry, at a sponsored event, where care is provided to the public without compensation. The volunteer practice of a student must be supervised by clinical faculty from the dental school in which the student is enrolled [Assembly Bill 880].
- Dentistry is the diagnosis or treatment, by surgery or other method, of diseases and lesions and the correction of malpositions of the human teeth, alveolar process, gums, jaws, or associated structures; and such diagnosis or treatment may include related procedures as well as the use of drugs, anesthetic agents, and physical evaluation.” [Dental Practice Act].

References:

- California Dental Association (*n.d.*). Frequently Asked Questions: AB 667 Topical Fluoride Legislation.
- Dental Board of California, Dental Practice Act - <http://www.dbc.ca.gov/lawsregs/laws.shtml>
- Assembly Bill 880 Dentistry: Licensure Exemption - https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB880
- Delivering Better Oral Health: An Evidenced-Based Toolkit for Prevention (2017). Public Health England.