



At-a-Glance

School-Based Fluoride Mouthrinse (FMR) Program



Tooth decay is the most widespread, chronic childhood disease and often requires extensive and costly repair. The use of fluorides, both ingested and applied directly to the teeth, helps prevent tooth decay. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) sponsors a school-based fluoride mouthrinse program, targeted to elementary schools in non-fluoridated communities.

In 2018-19, about 13,800 students at 68 schools participated. With parental consent, children rinse with a 0.2% solution of neutral sodium fluoride for one minute each week.

The procedure is as simple as 1 - 2 - 3:



1 The mouthrinse is prepared and placed in disposable cups.



2 Under adult supervision, the students rinse for one minute.



3 The rinse is returned to the cup for proper disposal.

The FMR program coordinator at each school oversees the mixing and distribution of the rinse to classrooms and maintains records of student participation. Teachers generally supervise the rinsing. ODH dental hygienists make periodic contacts and visits to schools to answer questions, observe the rinsing activity and train new coordinators.

Weekly mouthrinsing at school is desirable because:

- Little time is required for the procedure; less than five minutes per week for an average size class.
- Mouthrinsing is easy for schoolchildren of all ages and learning abilities.
- Non-dental personnel can easily supervise the activity, e.g., a parent, teacher, school nurse or secretary.
- The procedure is well accepted by students, school staff and parents.
- The program is completely compatible with other dental disease prevention programs at school (e.g., dental sealant programs) or at home.
- Studies show the mouthrinse is effective even when plaque is on the teeth.
- FMR supplies provided by ODH cost approximately 36 cents per child per year.

Fluoride, in combination with dental sealants, is the most effective way to prevent tooth decay. It is recommended that:

- Children drink fluoridated water and brush regularly with fluoride toothpaste.
- Children who are at high risk for tooth decay should follow a fluoride rinse program and/or receive a topical fluoride treatment at their dentist's office as needed.

Ohio organizations that recognize the benefits of fluoride mouthrinse:

- Ohio Dental Association
- Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association
- Ohio Department of Education
- Ohio Association of School Nurses
- Ohio Parent Teacher Association