

Each year about 400 Vermont children under age 6 are seen in a hospital to treat dental decay. A new treatment option can help to keep children out of the hospital.

**SDF is a new way to treat tooth decay.**

Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF) is a liquid that can be brushed on teeth to stop tooth decay. It is applied to teeth without using needles or a drill. SDF has both silver and fluoride in it. Silver kills the germs (bacteria) that cause decay. Fluoride helps repair the tooth. It works best when it is put on more than once. SDF may not work on all cavities. More dental work may still be needed.

**SDF turns the decayed area black.**

After SDF is put on, the area of decay turns black (see pictures). This means the SDF is working to kill the germs. A dental provider may cover the black treated area with a white filling material if needed.

**SDF has been approved by the FDA.**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of SDF in 2015. In 2017, the FDA granted SDF “breakthrough therapy designation” to stop tooth decay. Some dental providers in Vermont use SDF now. SDF has been used in other countries for many years.

**SDF can be very useful for some people.**

**Children:** It is hard for young children to sit still to have cavities filled. That is why some must go to the hospital to be sedated (“put under”) to get dental treatment. SDF is put on teeth without needles or drills, so fewer children need to go the hospital to be treated.

**Older Vermonters and Vermonters with disabilities:** It can be hard for some people to get to a dental office. SDF can be applied in nursing homes, [WIC](#) offices and community settings. SDF is a way to treat dental decay where people live.

**Medicaid covers SDF.**

Medicaid covers SDF treatment for tooth decay for children and adults.

**Not everyone can get SDF.**

SDF cannot be used if:

- You are allergic to silver
- You have painful sores or raw areas in your mouth.

**More Information**

Please contact your dental provider if you have more questions about SDF.

These teeth have been treated with SDF.

