How much toothpaste depends on age.

Over 90% of toothpastes sold in Japan contain fluoride, so it costs nothing extra.[1]

Fluoride toothpaste by age

As recommended by four Japanese dental societies (2023)[2]

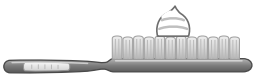
First tooth to age 2



A grain of rice (1–2 mm)

Strength	1,000 ppm (Japanese products: 900–1,000)
How	A tiny amount. You can wipe it off lightly with a tissue after brushing

Ages 3–5



A pea (5 mm)

Strength	1,000 ppm (same as above)
How	Spit out lightly after brushing. Rinse once with a little water. If they can't spit, an adult helps

Age 6 to older adults



The whole brush (1.5–2 cm)

Strength	1,500 ppm (Japanese products: 1,400–1,500)
How	Spit out lightly after brushing. Rinse once with a little water

◀ At every age, **twice a day, including before bed**. Keep toothpaste out of children's reach[2] ▶

- ☑ Avoid 1,500 ppm toothpaste for children under 6. **Don't use adult toothpaste for young children**[3]
- ☑ For ages 0–5, choose by the **fluoride ion concentration number** on the box (900–1,000 ppm), not by name or flavor[2]
- ☑ If your child has food allergies or asthma, ask your dentist before using toothpaste

Daily toothpaste is the base. Add an application or a rinse

Base

Daily fluoride toothpaste

Compared with no fluoride, it reduces cavities in both children and adults.[4] 1,450 ppm is also recommended to protect roots exposed by receding gums.[5]

+

Add

Fluoride applied at the dentist

Cavities in children's permanent and baby teeth each fell by **about 40%** (moderate-certainty evidence).[6] One application isn't enough; it needs to continue **at least twice a year**.[7]

or

Add

Fluoride rinse at home

In children who used it regularly, such as at school, cavities in permanent teeth fell by **about 30%** (moderate-certainty evidence).[8]

Adding a rinse or an application reduces cavities a little more (by about 10%).[9] Neither is clearly better than the other,[10] so **choose whichever is easier to keep up**.

If you use a fluoride rinse

- ☑ Use one from a pharmacy (225 ppm) or a dental clinic (250 ppm) **every day**, after brushing before bed. Then **don't eat, drink or rinse for 30 minutes**[11]
- ☑ Children start once they can swish water and spit it out well.[11] Follow the box for age and amount, with an adult watching

From your clinic A clinic stamp is fine for contact details

Phone _____ **Hours** _____ **Notes** _____

Today ☐ Fluoride application ☐ Toothpaste amount ☐ Fluoride rinse

Strength ☐ 1,000 ppm (900–1,000) ☐ 1,500 ppm (1,400–1,500) ☐ Other ( )

Next visit Date: Time:

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Written by a practising dentist (Zubora Ha Lab, Japan) · November 2026 edition

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What matters is how much.

Japan's Society for Oral Health: the amount from toothpaste etc. is tiny and poses no safety problem.[12]

Comparing amounts of fluoride

For a 15 kg child (about 3 years old)

Everyday amounts

One dose of toothpaste	ages 3–5, pea-sized, 1,000 ppm	**~0.25 mg**[3]
Left in the mouth after brushing	ages 3–5	**~0.06 mg**[1]
One fluoride rinse	225 ppm, 7 mL	**~1.6 mg**[11]

Reference amounts

Safe to take every day, long term	0.05 mg per kg per day	**~0.75 mg/day**[3]
Nausea may start	2 mg per kg; about 30 g of 1,000 ppm toothpaste	**~30 mg**[13]
May need treatment	5 mg per kg; about 75 g of 1,000 ppm toothpaste	**~75 mg**[14]

Bar length is proportional to the amount. The 15 kg figures and grams of toothpaste were calculated from the sources (1,000 ppm toothpaste contains about 1 mg of fluoride per gram).[15]

100×
or more

The gap between one dose of toothpaste and the amount at which nausea may start

Even if a 1-year-old swallowed all of it every time, together with fluoride from food, it would not reach the safe daily amount.[3]

☑ **The real risk** is a child getting into adult toothpaste or a rinse bottle. Keep them out of reach[2]

What you may hear, checked

You may hear

"It causes white spots on teeth"

Swallowing a lot while teeth form can cause white spots or streaks (dental fluorosis). The risk is concentrated at age 6 and under.[1] So the amount is set by age.[2][3]

You may hear

"It lowers IQ" / "It causes cancer"

Lower IQ was seen where intake is high, such as drinking water above the WHO limit.[16] Japan does not add fluoride to tap water.[15] No clear link between fluoride in drinking water and cancer has been shown.[17]

You may hear

"It was banned in the US"

In 2025, removal from the market began for **fluoride drugs that children swallow**, not toothpaste.[18] Some states stopped adding fluoride to tap water, but that is about tap water.[19]

Myth **"Fluoride-free toothpaste is gentler on the body"** → You give up the cavity protection. Below 1,000 ppm, toothpaste is not considered effective against cavities.[3]

Myth **"If the dentist applies fluoride, I don't need it at home"** → Application works only when continued at least twice a year.[7] The base is daily toothpaste.

Myth **"Rinse well after brushing to feel fresh"** → That washes the fluoride away. Rinse once with a little water.[2]

When to get help

Right away

- A child **got into a toothpaste tube or rinse bottle**, or has nausea or stomach pain → give milk and see a doctor[14]
- Not sure? **Japan Poison Information Center** (Japanese, 24 h): Osaka 072-727-2499, Tsukuba 029-852-9999[20]

Ask at a check-up

- **White spots or mottling** on your child's teeth → no rush. Have them checked for fluorosis or early decay
- Told your child has **many cavities** → ask how to use fluoride. The dentist may advise a stronger product[21]

No need to worry

- **Swallowed** a rice- or pea-sized amount of toothpaste
- Swallowed **a little** after rinsing[3][1]

References ([1]–[11] on page 1)

[12] Japanese Society for Oral Health. Further recommendation of fluoride use for caries prevention. 2025. [13] Japanese Society for Oral Health. Fluoride mouthrinse Q&A. [14] NHS Scotland. Childsmile Manual: Managing Fluoride. [15] MHLW e-health net. Water fluoridation. 2026. [16] National Toxicology Program. NTP Monograph 08. 2024. [17] SCHER (European Commission). Opinion on fluoride in drinking water. 2011. [18] U.S. HHS. FDA Begins Action to Remove Ingestible Fluoride Prescription Drug Products for Children from the Market. 2025. [19] Utah State Legislature. H.B. 81 Fluoride Amendments. 2025. [20] Japan Poison Information Center. For the public. [21] Four Japanese dental societies. Recommended use of fluoride toothpaste for caries prevention (public edition). 2023. (Web pages accessed Oct 2026.)

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