Fluoride

Most major Australian cities have had fluoridated water for 20 to 30 years.

One of the most beneficial discoveries in recent years is that fluoride encourages the enamel of the tooth to repair itself, providing the decay process has not gone too far.

In the first 10 years after its introduction in Australia, fluoridated water had resulted in decay rates dropping by up to 60%.
Approximately two out of every 3 Australians now drink fluoridated water.

30 years ago:

-the average teenager had 18 teeth either needing fillings, already filled or extracted due to decay;
-two-out-of-three older adults had lost all their teeth and wore dentures;
-many 16 year olds had to have all their teeth out due to decay.

Today, tooth extraction due to decay is a rarity and most teenagers have only four or five teeth filled or affected by decay (many with no decay at all) and the damage is often slight. Due to fluoride, today's young people may never need a filling.

How does fluoride prevent decay?

- It interferes with the bacteria in plaque – which break down sweet foods and starches to form aids which attack teeth.
- It alters the structure of tooth enamel to make it more resistant to acid attack.
- It helps to regenerate and repair enamel which has started to decay.

Ask your dentist or oral health therapist if you need fluoride solution applied to prevent decay starting. This concentrated fluoride stops the early stages of decay getting worse. The first signs of tooth decay are white areas appearing, often, on the neck of the tooth and between the teeth. Your dentist and oral therapist will check these areas and advise you how to prevent cavities developing.

Brushing with a fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day, especially after meals, is most important in preventing dental decay.

For further information about Fluoride, go the Australian Dental Association website at www.ada.org.au and follow the link to the Fluoride information.
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