

# Fluoride Gel Treatment Information

***GelKam 0.4% Stable Stannous Fluoride Gel***, for sensitive teeth and cavity prevention. This product is available over-the-counter (OTC) at a local drug store, such as WalMart, but must be asked for from the Pharmacist as it is not usually left on the shelves. This medicament is indicated for patients with sensitivity, or a high caries rate, such as patients with dry mouth syndrome.

Use of fluoride gel is recommended for prevention of tooth decay (caries) and sensitivity. Teeth are composed primarily of enamel and dentin. The enamel is what most people associate with teeth, as it is what is usually seen in the mouth, the white portion of the teeth. Enamel is made of a hard mineralized tissue that has no nerve endings but is usually the first area of caries attack in grooves and fissures of the tooth, or in or below contact areas of the teeth. Without nerve endings these areas of the teeth can have decay continue until it is too late. What most of the tooth is composed of is dentin, which is darker, and more yellow in color. Inside the tooth is a chamber and a canal which extends down the tooth to the tip. This area inside the tooth is filled with nerves and blood vessels (arteries and veins), and other tissue. The inside of the tooth is lined with cells that have a tube-like extensions that extend from the inside of this chamber to the outside. The outside limit of these tubes end at either the enamel or below the enamel on the root surface. The root surface is normally covered with gum tissue, but can become exposed for a variety of reasons. This root surface area is a primary area of sensitivity. Once the root surface is exposed it is susceptible to both sensitivity and decay. Fluoride helps to remineralize the damaged tooth, and helps block the tubules to block sensitivity. It changes the structure of the minerals in the tooth and also help prevent further decay.

## Treatment

The teeth have to be cleaned completely before using fluoride. Brush and floss completely and then use fluoride. Application can be made by different methods, but it is easiest to add to your toothbrush and then apply to all areas of the teeth. I recommend then swishing between and around all the teeth for 5 minutes, then spitting out. This can be done once or twice a day, or even once a week, as directed by the dentist. But, once a day is usually sufficient, usually at night before retiring for bed so that the concentration stays in the mouth and on the teeth. Special custom trays can be fabricated in some instances to assist in application to specific areas if indicated.