

Dental Council position on the regulatory requirements on application of Silver diamine fluoride

3 March 2025

The topical application of Silver diamine fluoride (SDF) to teeth can be an effective treatment for dental caries, prevention of dental caries and dentinal hypersensitivity.

The Dental Council considers:

1. The *management of any disorder or condition/disease of the oral cavity and associated facial structures* that involves surgical or operative procedures below the gingival margin or the surface of the skin, mucous membranes or teeth is a restricted activity, that can only be performed by a registered oral health practitioner.
2. The topical application of SDF to manage a carious lesion is considered management of a disease and is a restricted activity, that can only be performed by an appropriately registered oral health practitioner.
3. The topical application of SDF by unregistered persons is not permitted.

The following table details the regulatory requirements:

Management of dental caries using Silver diamine fluoride		
Role	Application of SDF	Medicine legal requirements
Oral health therapist		
Patient <18 years	Can apply as per scope of practice	
Patient >18 years	Can apply under instruction of a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dentist/dental specialist • Oral health therapist adult restorative exclusion on their scope of practice • Dental therapist registered with adult care 	Not applicable – exempted under Schedule 1 of Medicines Regulations
Patient >18 years	Can apply as per scope of practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Adult restorative care exclusion on scope of practice 	

Dental therapist		
Patient <18 years	Can apply as per scope of practice	
Patient >18 years	Can apply under instruction of a:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Adult care scope of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dentist/dental specialist Oral health therapist adult restorative exclusion on their scope of practice Dental therapist registered with adult care 	
Patient >18 years	Can apply as per scope of practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult care scope of practice 		
Dental hygienist	Not permitted	Not applicable

Prevention of dental caries using Silver diamine fluoride

Role	Application of SDF	Medicine legal requirements
Oral health therapist	Can apply as per scope of practice	
Dental therapist		
Patient <18 years	Can apply as per scope of practice	
Patient >18 years	Can apply under instruction of a:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Adult care scope of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dentist/dental specialist Oral health therapist adult restorative exclusion on their scope of practice Dental therapist registered with adult care 	Not applicable – exempted under Schedule 1 of Medicines Regulations
Patient >18 years	Can apply as per scope of practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult care scope of practice 		
Dental hygienist	Can apply as per scope of practice	

Dentinal hypersensitivity

Role	Application of SDF	Medicine legal requirements
Registered oral health practitioner	Can apply as per scope of practice	Not applicable – exempted under Schedule 1 of Medicines Regulations