Thank you for taking the time to read our Fall 2016 Newsletter. We are excited to tell you about a product that has been used for a long time globally but is now being made available to dentists in the United States.

Whether we are young or old no one enjoys going to the dentist to have a cavity drilled and filled. We are pleased to announce that for some patients there may be an alternative, an antimicrobial liquid that can be brushed on cavities to stop tooth decay. The liquid is called silver diamine fluoride, or SDF.

The Food & Drug Administration has approved SDF as a desensitizer, it has been used by dentists globally to arrest, or stop decay, especially in childrens primary teeth. There have been several international studies done that have shown that it works to both prevent and arrest decay in the dentin. No other product on the market has been able to arrest dentin caries until now. SDF is unique because it is able to act in 2 ways. The silver component kills bacteria and prevents the formation of new biofilm, at the application site. The silver and the fluoride then work together to form fluorapetite, which strengthens the tooths outer surface. Likely a result of its fluoride content, when applied to a carious lesion, SDF has been shown to lower caries risk of the adjacent tooth surface.

Studies have shown that silver diamine fluoride has another advantage over traditional treatment: It kills the bacteria that cause decay. A second treatment applied six to 18 months after the first markedly arrests cavities. Fillings, on the other hand, do not cure an oral infection, which is what decay is.

Application of SDF is simple and non-invasive, leading to good cooperation among children, handicapped individuals, and the elderly. The non-invasive treatment may be ideal for the indigent, nursing home residents and others who have trouble finding care, and many anxious patients wanting to dodge the drill. But SDF may be especially useful for children.

The up side of SDF is there is no drilling, no injection. The down side, it stains the tooth darker, and when applied a metallic taste has been noticed. Patients with mouth sores or silver allergies can’t use it.

Silver diamine fluoride is not a cure all for decay, most cavities will still need to be drilled and filled, but it will be an alternative for some patients. We try to always stay up to date with any new dental products that will be of benefit to our patients