### Expert Committee recommendation

The Expert Committee noted that dental caries of permanent teeth affects an estimated 2.3 billion people worldwide and more than 530 million children suffer from caries of primary teeth. Inequalities throughout the life course and across populations in the low-, middle- and high-income countries were also noted, with the highest burden in countries with limited resources for caries prevention and control. The Expert Committee noted that the use of fluoride toothpaste reduces caries lesions by one quarter compared with non-fluoride toothpaste, according to cumulative data across studies. Despite fluoride toothpaste being a foundation of oral health prevention strategies, the Committee observed that the current listing for sodium fluoride in the EML and EMLc does not specify the form and concentration range of topical fluoride products used to prevent dental caries, specifying only “in any appropriate topical formulation”. The Committee considered that to provide the best guidance for selection of products for national EMLs, the Model Lists should include specific recommendations of the different formulation types and ideal concentrations of fluoride-containing preparations. The Expert Committee took into account that fluoridated toothpaste containing between 1000 ppm and 1500 ppm fluoride is the standard strength recommended by WHO as a public oral health measure to prevent caries. The Committee also considered that to prevent the risk associated with ingestion of toothpaste, limitation of package size and maximum fluoride content for a single unit with a well defined concentration range would be helpful. Furthermore, the Committee noted the risk of substandard toothpastes being marketed with low or nil concentration of fluoride. Specifying fluoride amount and concentration can help national authorities to develop standards for production and to implement quality-control actions to identify marketed toothpastes that do not meet recommended fluoride standards. The Committee also noted that additional fluoride sources (e.g. water supply) should be taken into consideration by countries. The Expert Committee recommended that the current listing for sodium fluoride be transferred from Section 27 (Vitamins and Minerals) to a new section of the EML and EMLc for dental preparations. The listing should be amended to “fluoride”, noting that topical fluoride-containing...
preparations use fluoride in a variety of forms. Fluoride toothpaste is recommended for inclusion as a specifically defined formulation of fluoride (paste, cream or gel containing between 1000 ppm and 1500 ppm fluoride any type), because of its proven effectiveness in preventing dental caries and for better control of the quantity of fluoride contained in toothpaste. The Committee requested WHO to identify and define the alternative fluoride-containing formulations that are recommended for use in the prevention of dental caries so that these can be clearly indicated in the Model Lists in 2023 to provide clear guidance to countries.