

February

Dental Digest

February 2018 Volume 2, Issue 2



National Children's Dental Health

How Do I Help My Children Care for Their Teeth and Prevent Cavities?

Teaching your child proper oral care at a young age is an investment in his or her health that will pay lifelong dividends. You can start by setting an example; taking good care of your own teeth sends a message that oral health is something to be valued. And anything that makes taking care of teeth fun, like brushing along with your child or letting them choose their own toothbrush, encourages proper oral care.


To help your children protect their teeth and gums and greatly reduce their risk of getting cavities, teach them to follow these simple steps:

- Brush twice a day to remove plaque-the sticky film on teeth that's the main cause of tooth decay
- Floss daily to remove plaque from between your teeth and under the gum line, before it can harden into tartar. Once tartar has formed, it can only be removed by a professional cleaning.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that limits starchy or sugary foods, which produce plaque acids that cause tooth decay. When you do eat these foods, try to eat them with your meal instead of as a snack-the extra saliva produced during a meal helps rinse food from the mouth.
- Take your child to the dentist for regular checkups.

What Brushing Techniques Can I Show My Child?

You may want to supervise your children until they get the hang of these simple steps:

- Use a pea-sized dab of toothpaste. Take care that your child does not swallow the toothpaste.
- Using a soft-bristled toothbrush, brush the inside surface of each tooth first, where plaque may accumulate most. Brush gently back and forth.
- Clean the outer surfaces of each tooth. Angle the brush along the outer gum line. Gently brush back and forth.
- Brush the chewing surface of each tooth. Gently brush back and forth.
- Use the tip of the brush to clean behind each front tooth, both top and bottom.
- It's always fun to brush the tongue!



February is the National Children's Dental Health Month! Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease, but in most cases it is very preventable. Because children follow the habits and routines they learn during childhood, it becomes very important to instill good dental habits at an early age! Bring your child in for a visit this month and we will gladly teach them how to take care of their teeth, and they will receive a fun goody bag too!

In the spirit of Valentine's Day we also wanted to take this opportunity to say that we love having you as our patients and we look forward to serving you and your families!

- Cris Turman





When Should My Child Begin Flossing?

Because flossing removes food particles and plaque between teeth that brushing misses, you should begin flossing for your children's teeth as soon as they touch one another. By the time they reach age 8, most kids can begin flossing for themselves.

What are Dental Sealants and How Do I Know if My Child Needs Them?

A dental sealant creates a highly-effective barrier against decay. Sealants are thin plastic coatings applied to the chewing surfaces of a child's permanent back teeth, where most cavities form. Applying a sealant is not painful and can be performed in one dental visit. Dr. Turman will tell you whether your child might benefit from a dental sealant during your child's cleaning and exam.

How Important is Diet to My Child's Oral Health?

A balanced diet is necessary for your child to develop strong, decay-resistant teeth. In addition to a full range of vitamins and minerals, a child's diet should include plenty of calcium and phosphorus.

Snacking may also be your child's biggest enemy when it comes to tooth decay. The sugars and starches found in many foods and snacks like cookies, candies, dried fruit, soft drinks, pretzels and potato chips, and all other Valentine's Day goodies combine with plaque on teeth to create acids. These acids attack the tooth enamel and may lead to cavities.

Each "plaque attack" can last up to 20 minutes after a meal or snack has been finished. Even a little nibble can create plaque acids. Now kids are kids and of course they deserve to have snacks in moderation however, try to choose healthier choices for snacks. If you choose to give your child the occasional candy or sticky snack, be sure to accompany it with plenty of water to give those teeth a good rinse afterward or, better yet, encourage them to brush.

What Should I Do if My Child Chips, Breaks or Knocks Out a Tooth?

With any injury to your child's mouth, you should contact Dr. Turman immediately. He will want to examine the affected area and determine appropriate treatment.

If your child is in pain from a broken, cracked or chipped tooth, you should visit the dentist immediately. You may want to give an over-the-counter pain reliever to your child until his/her appointment. If possible, keep any part of the tooth that has broken off and take this with you to the dentist.

If a tooth is completely knocked out of the mouth by an injury, take the tooth to your dentist as soon as possible. Handle the tooth as little as possible — do not wipe or otherwise clean the tooth. Store the tooth in water or milk until you get to one of our locations. It may be possible for the tooth to be placed back into your child's mouth, a procedure called reimplantation.

Again, teaching your child proper oral care at a young age is an investment in his or her health that will pay life-long dividends. Set a good example for your children, make brushing teeth fun, be involved and let them know that developing good habits young is important for their overall health.