

HEALTHY HABITS FOR A LIFETIME

Create Healthy Routines

Be a role model for your child. Brush and floss your teeth with your child in the morning and at night. Make taking care of your mouth part of your daily routine.



Eat a Balanced Diet

Eat a healthy diet adding fruits and vegetables to every meal. Limit desserts, junk food, and sugary drinks to special occasions. Drink water throughout the day. This helps cleanse the mouth and rinse off sugary foods and drinks.



Exercise Every Day

Aim to be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day. That helps strengthen your muscles, bones, and keeps your heart strong.



Avoid Smoking and Vaping

Smoking and vaping can affect how you feel and how you learn. They have negative effects on your body affecting your lungs, heart, and brain, and that will impact you for a lifetime.



Visit a Doctor and Dentist Regularly

Doctors and dentists help make sure you are healthy and staying healthy through routine exams and checkups.



IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ORAL HEALTH

Oral health is part of total health!

As a public health educator, your role is vital in teaching parents the importance of oral health. Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among children. Cavities can cause pain and make eating, sleeping, and speaking difficult. Children with poor oral health can experience low self-esteem and have difficulty learning. Educating families on how to care for their mouth and body will help them stay healthy, avoid disease, and build good habits that will benefit them for a lifetime.

Additional Resources

American Dental Association: <https://bit.ly/2GG56Lz>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://bit.ly/3zfHz1u>

Flavors Hook Kids: <https://bit.ly/3TU4F7q>

Rethink Your Drink: <https://bit.ly/42FCWuW>

Smile California: <https://bit.ly/3FYUx7E>



ORAL HEALTH KEY MESSAGES

Oral Health for Pregnant People

- Taking care of your mouth during pregnancy is very important.
- Due to hormonal changes, gums can turn red, become swollen, and bleed from inflammation.
- Research suggest that dental disease can be a risk factor for preterm labor and low birth weight babies.
- Visit a dentist as part of prenatal care.



Oral Health for Babies

- If a mother has poor oral health, the bacteria that cause cavities can be passed on to the baby.
- Healthy mouth care begins before teeth erupt.
- Wipe baby's gums after each feeding.
- Babies should not go to sleep with a bottle.
- Begin brushing once teeth erupt.
- First dental visit by age ONE or when first tooth erupts.



Oral Health for Toddlers and Children

- Baby teeth are important. Cavities can be painful and affect the growth and development of your baby.
- Begin brushing teeth twice a day and floss when two teeth touch.
- Limit foods and drinks high in sugar.
- Provide fruits and vegetables for snacks and meals.
- Drink water.
- Visit the dentist regularly.



EARLY CHILDHOOD CARIES

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Normal Healthy Primary Teeth

Teeth are white with smooth surfaces. Gum tissue should be firm, and immobile.

Refer to dental home for regular care.



Chalky White Spots

Signs of early decay and weak enamel. Will progress if left untreated.

Refer to dentist as soon as possible.



Brown Spots

Signifies advanced or severe decay. Will continue to progress if left untreated.

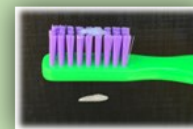
Refer to dentist immediately.



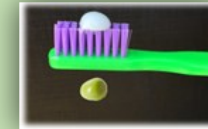
CAVITIES ARE PREVENTABLE!

Amount of Fluoridated Toothpaste

As soon as first tooth erupts, brush using a smear or rice size amount of fluoridated toothpaste.



Under 3 years



3 years and over

Brush using a pea size amount of fluoridated

Early childhood caries photos reused with permission from the American Academy of Pediatrics. A Pediatric Guide to Children's Oral Health. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2009