

February is Children's Dental Health Month!

Have you heard? You should only take care of the teeth you want to keep! Daily oral hygiene and regular dental visits play an important role in your child's dental and overall health.

DAILY ORAL HYGIENE:

Children should brush their teeth at least twice a day for two minutes and floss once a day to remove plaque and food where a brush can't reach. To help younger children, find a song or video they like or tell a 2-minute story to them while they are brushing and you are supervising them.

- Use a soft toothbrush, with the size and shape allowing them to reach all areas of their mouth.
- Replace the toothbrush every three to four months, when the bristles are worn, or if your child has been ill.
- Use a pea-sized dab (for 3-6 year olds) or slightly larger amount (over age 6) of fluoride toothpaste.
- Spit out, rather than swallow the toothpaste.
- Place the brush at an angle against the gums.
- Brush back and forth, gently, in short strokes.
- Brush the front, back, and top of the teeth.
- Brush the tongue to remove germs and freshen breath.

ROUTINE DENTAL VISITS:

Children should see a dentist twice a year, as this is a time of great change in their mouths.

Regular cleanings can:

- Help children learn how to care for their teeth.
- Help catch and treat tooth decay early.
- Help prevent gum disease, which can lead to tooth loss.
- Remove tartar, which makes it harder to get teeth clean.
- Remove stains not removed with brushing and flossing.

WHY IS DENTAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?

- National studies show only one in five school age children eats the recommended daily serving of fruits and vegetables, greatly increasing the risk of cavities.
- Additionally, only one in five children meets the minimum standards for calcium consumption, essential to strengthen teeth and bones.
- Sodas, sugar filled drinks, and sugary, high carbohydrate foods are displacing healthier food options, such as milk, fruits, and vegetables, increasing the risk of cavities.
- Dental disease is the most common chronic childhood disease. It is more prevalent today than childhood asthma.
- Untreated dental health concerns can impair the ability to eat, speak, sleep, and learn.
- More than 51 million school hours are lost annually because of dental related illnesses.
- Most dental health problems are preventable, through regular dental examinations, oral health education and primary disease prevention.

www.mndental.org

<http://www.colgate.com/en/us/oc/search-results?tag=children>

<http://www.knowyourteeth.com/family/>

<http://2min2x.org/kids-healthy-mouths/index.html>