

Your Health and Safety Matters!

Children's Dental Health Month



February is:

“National Children’s Dental Health Month”!

The Importance of Pediatric Dentist Visits

Tooth decay (cavities) is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood in the United States. Untreated tooth decay can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning.

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, more than 50 percent of children will be affected by tooth decay before age five.

Cavities are surprisingly common in children: 5x more common than asthma, 7x more common than hay fever, and also more common than type 2 diabetes and obesity.

Many cavities go untreated. A study by the CDC reports that approximately 42% of children ages 2-11 have untreated cavities.

- 1 of 7 (13%) adolescents aged 12 to 19 years have at least one untreated decayed tooth.
- The percentage of children and adolescents aged 5 to 19 years with untreated tooth decay is twice as high for those from low-income families (25%) compared with children from higher-income households (11%).

The good news is that tooth decay is preventable. Fluoride varnish, a high concentration fluoride coating that is painted on teeth, can prevent about one-third (33%) of decay in the primary (baby) teeth. Children living in communities with fluoridated tap water have fewer decayed teeth than children who live in areas where their tap water is not fluoridated. Similarly, children who brush daily with fluoride toothpaste will have less tooth decay.



Applying dental sealants to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth is another way to prevent tooth decay. Studies in children show that sealants reduce decay in the permanent molars by 81% for 2 years after they are placed on the tooth and continue to be effective for 4 years after placement.

Keep Healthy Teeth with the 2-2-2 Rule

Help keep your child's teeth healthy by using the 2-2-2 rule: visit your dentist two times a year, and brush and floss TWO times a day for TWO whole minutes!

How Do You Get Kids to Brush Their Teeth?

Our pediatric dentists recommend parents follow the "tell, show, do" model:



THE 2-2-2 RULE

- **Tell:** In age-appropriate language, explain how to brush and floss and how those actions keep teeth clean and healthy
- **Show:** Let children watch when mom or dad brush and floss their own teeth
- **Do:** Help children brush and floss their teeth in the morning and before bed, and keep a regular routine so they know it's expected. Continue helping to brush a child's teeth until age 4 or 5. After that, let them do it themselves, but supervise them until age 7 or 8. Both children and adults should brush for two minutes, twice a day

School Hours Lost to Dental-Related Conditions

According to the Office of the Surgeon General, more than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related conditions. Help prevent lost school days by following the 2-2-2 rule!

The Return of Investing in Preventative Dental Care

According to the American Dental Hygienists Association, every dollar spent on preventative dental care could save you \$8 to \$50 in restorative and emergency dental treatments and potentially more in additional types of medical treatment. A child should see a pediatric dentist when their first tooth appears, or by his or her first birthday.

Oral Hygiene: the Importance of Brushing and Flossing

Your oral health can offer clues about your overall health or that problems in your mouth can affect the rest of your body? Like many areas of the body, your mouth is teeming with bacteria. Typically, the body's natural defenses and good oral hygiene can keep these bacteria under control. However, if you don't remove the bacteria daily with brushing and flossing, it can cause cavities or gum disease.

Resources

National Children's Dental Health Resources

https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/children_adults/child.htm

<https://nationaltoday.com/national-childrens-dental-health-month/>

<https://childrensdentalhealth.com/february-national-childrens-dental-health-month/>

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