

Wellness

Teeth Training-From Toddlers to Teens

Top 10 Ways to Keep your Child's Teeth Healthy

Lata Stefano, D.D.S. and owner of Lata Stefano, D.D.S., Inc. general dentistry practice in Sandusky, Ohio, suggest that maintaining healthy teeth starts at infancy. She recommends the following ten tips to keeping your child's teeth healthy and strong for a lifetime.

1. **INFANT HYGIENE-** It's never too early to start. It's good practice to clean baby's gums with a washcloth or fingercot. This will get the child use to the routine of oral hygiene and keep their mouth clean.

2. **NUTRITION-** Nutrition is an important factor in oral health for kids. Limit juice, soda and sugary drinks. White milk and water are the best for children. High fructose corn syrup is a top ingredient in many drinks today, so be sure to check the nutrition labels.

3. **FIRST DENTAL VISIT-** A good rule of thumb is to visit the dentist six months after the child's first tooth appears. This first dental visit introduces the child to the dentist, as well as allows the dentist to give the parent home-care instructions and examine the child's mouth. This is a stress-free appointment to get the child acquainted with the dental environment in a comfortable way. Allow your toddler to watch you at your hygiene visit with your dentist.

4. **BRUSHING-** Brushing twice a day is important for adults as well as children. Allow your child to watch you brush. Let them have a turn to brush their own teeth and then an adult should take a turn to ensure the child's teeth are properly cleaned.

5. **FLOSSING-** By age 6, first permanent molars usually develop. This is a good time for parents to floss their children's teeth and teach them to do it themselves.

6. **FLUORIDE-** Fluoride toothpaste is recommended after the child is able to spit into a sink, which is generally around age 3. Prior to this age, a training toothpaste can be used which does not contain fluoride. Fluoride rinse can be used as well for children able to spit.

7. **CHECK WATER-** Generally speaking, fluoride supplements are not necessary because city water contains fluoride in it. Check with your dentist if you use well water. Many times the water can be tested.

8. **SNACKS-** Any sugary or sticky food is prone to cause decay, even fruit snacks. Limit snacks to certain times of the day so that your child isn't constantly exposing their teeth to sugar. Brushing after snacks is a good idea too.

9. **SEALANTS-** Ask your dentist about sealants for the adult teeth that come in between age 6 and 12. This protective coating can help prevent decay on the grooves of the teeth.

10. **MAINTENANCE-** Schedule regular cleanings. It's important that children see a dentist regularly for bi-annual cleanings. Preventive treatment is the best treatment for maintaining healthy teeth and gums for your children throughout their life.

For questions about this article or for more information about Lata Stefano, D.D.S., Inc, visit their web site at www.stefanodental.com or call 419-626-2205

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