

Give Kids a Smile

Minnesota Dental Association

Keeping your child's teeth healthy at home

Healthy teeth make for healthy smiles. That's why the Minnesota Dental Association and volunteer dentists teamed up to provide the dental care your child received today. It's our way of making a healthy difference in the lives of kids. Here are a few things you can do at home to help your child maintain healthy teeth:

Brush. Make sure your child brushes after every meal and before bedtime. Brushing helps remove bacteria, which forms plaque and causes cavities.

Floss. By the age of eight, your child should be able to floss under your supervision. Flossing is important after brushing because it removes plaque where a toothbrush can't reach.

Eat right. Healthy kids and healthy teeth need a balanced diet. Make sure your child eats a variety of nutritious foods. Milk is especially important for growing children to build strong bones and teeth. When you give your child a snack, avoid candy and other sweet treats. Substitute fruit, raisins, cheese or nuts when your child wants a snack. In addition to milk, make sure your child drinks lots of water. The fluoride in water helps protect your child's teeth against tooth decay.

Hard Facts about Sour Candy

Sour candies are popular and may seem harmless. But they can have a devastating effect on teeth. The high acidity of these candies can weaken and wear away tooth enamel. We recommend you reduce or eliminate consumption of sour candies. If your child does eat sour candies:

- Ask your child to swish his/her mouth with water, drink milk, or eat cheese afterwards to neutralize the acids. Wait one hour before brushing teeth. Brushing right away increase the harmful effects of acid on teeth.
- Don't suck or chew sour candies for long periods of time.

Sip All Day, Get Decay

A steady diet of soda pop is very bad for your child's teeth. All types of soft drinks contain sugar, acid or both. Sugar and acid damage tooth enamel, which leads to cavities. Diet or "sugar-free" pop is no better than pop with sugar. If your child does drink pop:

- Make sure he/she doesn't sip for extended periods of time.
- After drinking, ask your child to swish his/her mouth out with water to dilute the sugar.
- Never allow pop or juice before bedtime because the liquid pools in the child's mouth and coats the tongue and teeth with sugar and acid.

Information about your dental visit today

Date: _____

Services provided: _____

Diagnosis: _____

Recommendations: _____

