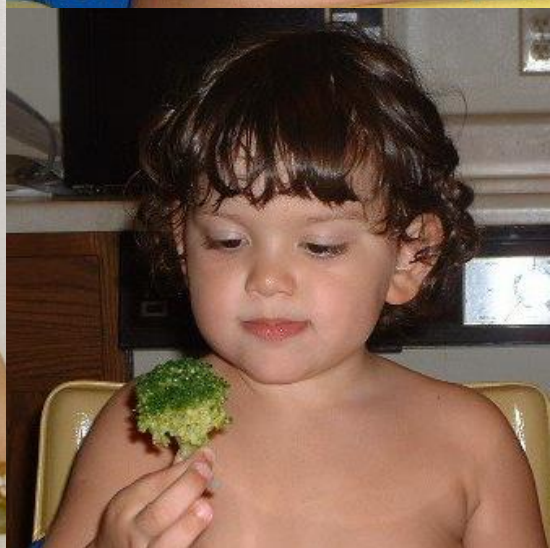




# Healthy Smiles for Young Children



# Basic Oral Health Care During Pregnancy

## During Pregnancy:

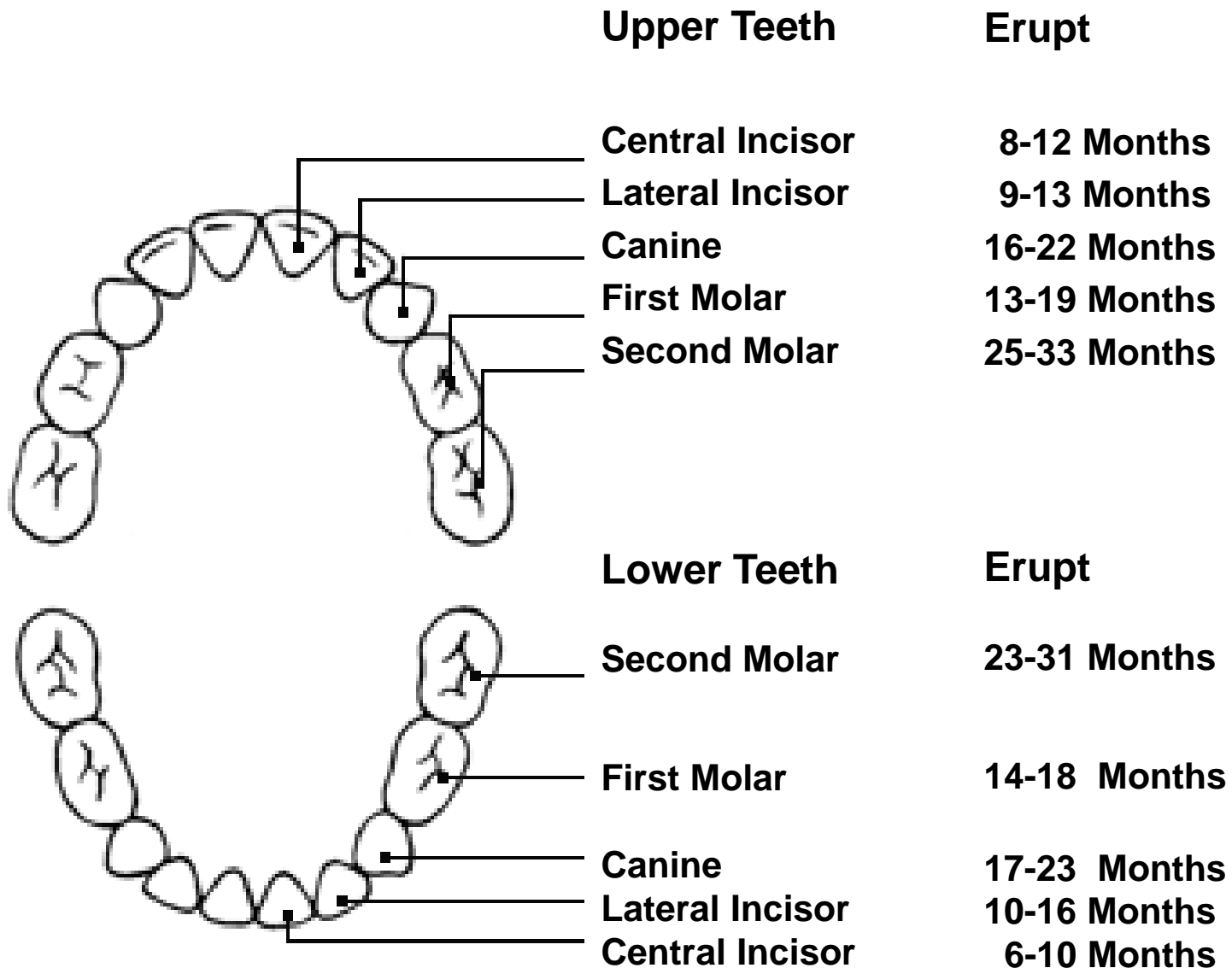
- Have a dental checkup.
- Brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily.
- Limit sweets and avoid sticky foods.
- Visit your doctor for pre-natal care.
- Have an adequate amount of calcium: milk, cheese, leafy green vegetables, and dried beans.

# Basic Oral Health Care During Pregnancy

- Have a dental checkup.
- Brush daily with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily.
- Limit sweets and sticky foods.
- Visit your doctor for pre-natal care.
- Have an adequate amount of calcium.



# When Will My Child's Teeth Come In?



# When Will My Child's Teeth Come In?



**First primary teeth: usually lower central incisors around 6 months**



**All 20 primary teeth by 3 years**

# Signs of Teething

- Teething occasionally may cause mild irritability, crying, low-grade temperature (but not over 100 degrees Fahrenheit), sore gums, excessive drooling and a desire to chew on something hard. Sometimes, there may be no symptoms.
- Pain relievers and medications that you rub on the gums are not necessary or useful because they are washed out of the baby's mouth within minutes.
- When your baby is irritable from teething, let him chew on something cool like a clean cold wash cloth or a solid teething ring. Avoid teething biscuits since most are sugary, increasing the risk of decay and can be a choking hazard, especially for babies who have not yet started solids.
- Teething does not usually make a child sick. If your child seems particularly miserable, has diarrhea or a fever higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, it's probably not because he's teething, and you should consult your pediatrician.

# Signs of Teething

- Sore gums
- Increased drooling
- Fussy and irritable
- Chews on everything



# Why are Primary Teeth Important?

- For overall health.
- For children to learn to speak clearly.
- For chewing food and good nutrition. Children with healthy teeth chew easily.
- To save space for permanent teeth and guide them into place.
- To aid in jaw and face formation.
- To help children smile with confidence and build self-esteem.
- For a pretty smile.



# Why Are Primary Teeth Important?

- Overall health
- Clear speech
- Eating well
- Saving Space
- Pretty Smile



# Early Childhood Cavities

- Cavities in baby teeth are a serious problem. Cavities in baby teeth can lead to pain, infection, bleeding, and hospitalization.
- Many children experience severe cavities as early as age 1, 2, or 3.
- Severe cavities can prevent children from growing and developing normally. Pain reduces a child's ability to eat, sleep, and learn.
- Often, cavities in young children are so severe they are put to sleep in the hospital to have their teeth treated.

# Early Childhood Cavities

- **Cavities in baby teeth can lead to:**
  - Pain
  - Infection
  - Bleeding
  - Hospitalization
  
- **Pain reduces children's ability to:**
  - Eat
  - Sleep
  - Learn



# **Cavities can progress quickly**

- The first signs of cavities are white spots or lines along the gum line.
- Cavities may form and become painful broken teeth in a few months.
- Hospitalization may be required if cavities are not treated in time.
- Regular visits with a dental professional and daily toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste can remineralize white spots on teeth and avoid progression to future painful broken teeth.

# Cavities can progress quickly



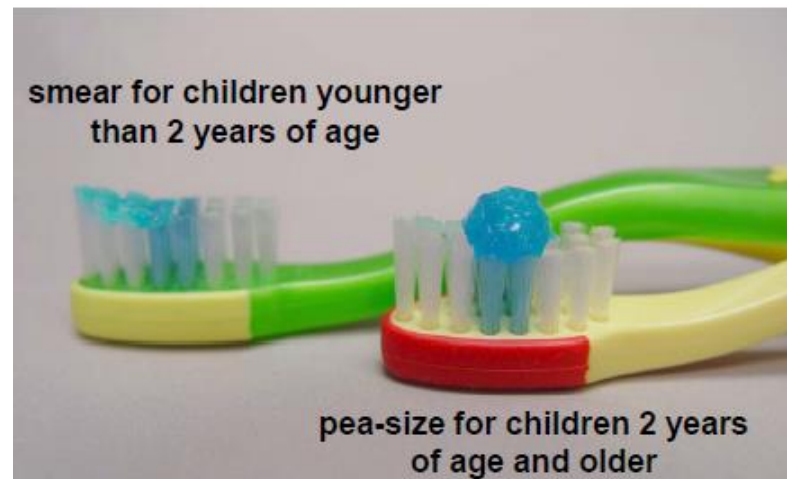
From white spots to painful broken teeth  
in a few months

# Cavities are Preventable

- Regular dental visits starting at age one.
- Give your child a healthy diet, low in sweets.
- If your child sleeps with a bottle or sippy-cup, put only water inside them.
- Avoid sugary beverages throughout the day; best to use open cups for these beverages.
- As soon as the first tooth appears, brush your child's teeth daily with fluoride toothpaste. Use the proper amount of toothpaste for your child's age:
  - Smear amount for children younger than 2 years of age
  - Pea-sized amount for children 2 years of age and older
- Look at your child's teeth carefully at least once a month for early signs of cavities (white spots).

# Cavities are Preventable

- Dental visits starting at age one
- Diet low in sweets
- Only water in sleeping bottles and sippy-cups
- Avoid sugary beverages throughout the day
- Daily toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste
- Look regularly at child's teeth



Proper amount of toothpaste

# What Causes Cavities?

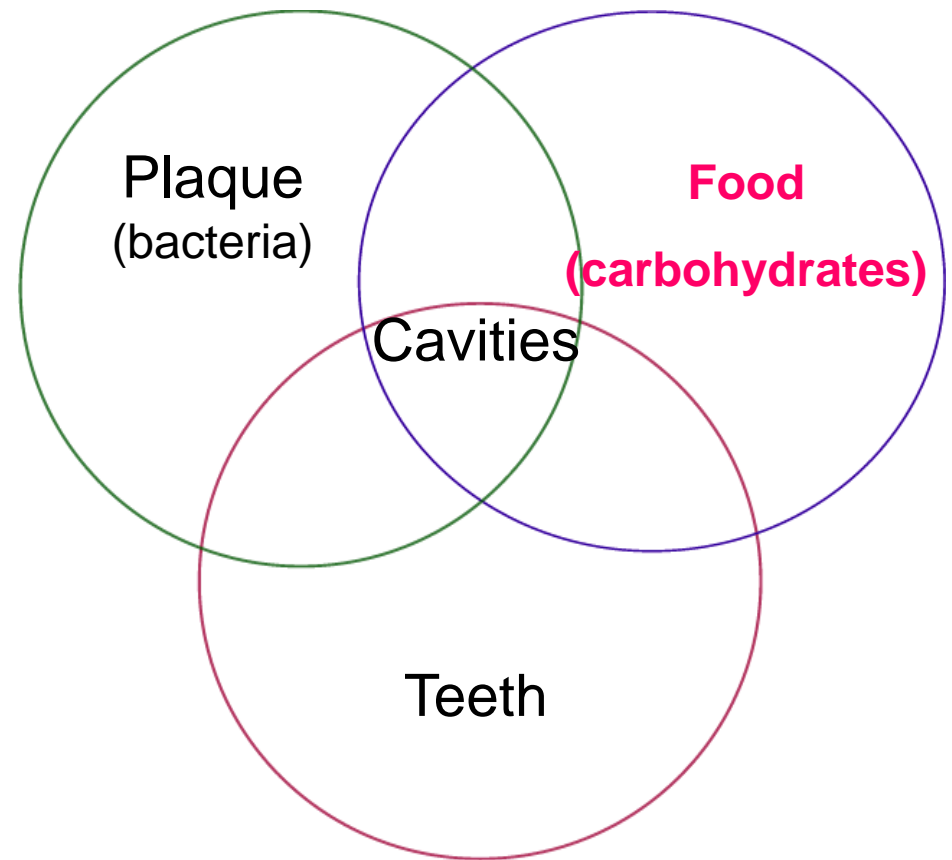
- For cavities to form, you need three things:
  1. **Plaque: bacteria (germs) on your teeth**  
Plaque is a sticky film, made up mainly of bacteria, which forms every day on the teeth and along the gum line. Initially plaque appear tooth colored. If not removed completely, it will become old and show the colors of foods and beverages drink or eat (yellow, orange, etc.)
  2. **Food: carbohydrates and sugars); and**
  3. **Teeth**
- **Bacteria (germs) in plaque breaks down the carbohydrates and sugars producing an acid that attacks the teeth causing cavities. Bacteria can also attack the gums leading to gum inflammation (gingivitis).**



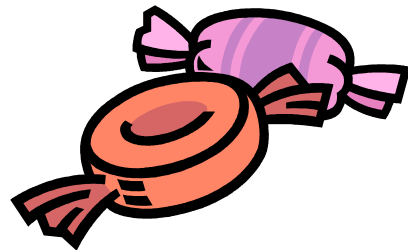
# What Causes Cavities?

For cavities to form, you need three things:

- Plaque = bacteria on your teeth
- Food = carbohydrates and sugars
- Teeth



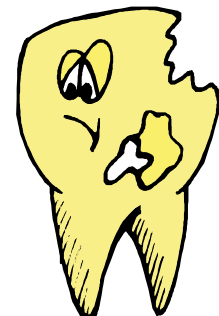
+



+



=



# Cavities Are Caused By Bacteria

- Bacteria (or germs) that causes cavities can spread from parent to child.
- Keep your mouth and teeth clean and healthy to prevent spreading high levels of decay-causing bacteria.
- Avoid activities that could spread your saliva to your child's mouth:
  - Don't share a toothbrush with your child.
  - Don't lick or suck on your child's pacifier or bottle.
  - Don't pre-chew food your child will eat.
  - Don't share the same utensils with your child (cups, spoons, and forks).

# Cavities Are Caused By Bacteria

Bacteria (or germs) can spread from parent to child:

- Keep your mouth and teeth healthy.
- Don't share a toothbrush with your child.
- Don't lick or suck on your child's hands, pacifier, or bottle.
- Don't pre-chew food your child will eat.
- Don't share the same utensils with your child.



# Basic Oral Health

## Birth to Two Years

- Place baby's head in your lap to clean teeth.
- Clean child's mouth from birth with a wash cloth (bath time is a great time to start this oral habit for both mom and child).
- As soon as the first baby teeth appear and until the child is 2 years of age, brush with a smear amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Check child's teeth frequently for changes (such as early signs of cavities—white spots).

# Basic Oral Health Birth to Two Years



**Clean child's mouth with a wash cloth**



**Brush child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste**



**Use smear amount of fluoride toothpaste**



**Check child's teeth for changes**

# Basic Oral Health

## Age Two to Five Years

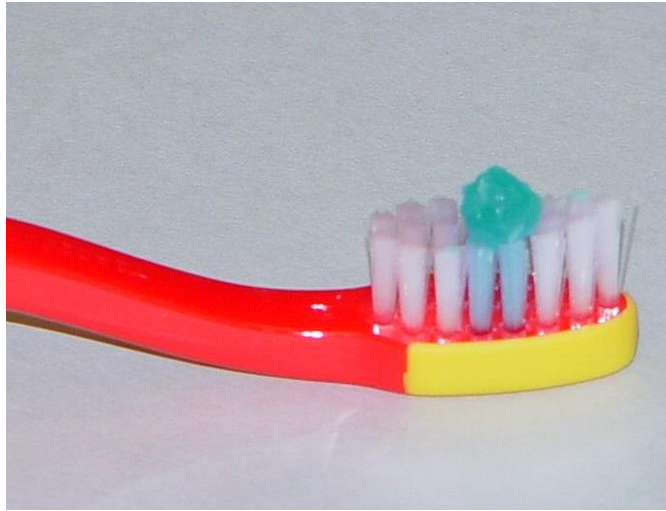
- Brush child's teeth twice daily, especially before bed.
- To develop a good brushing habits, brush at the same time every day.
- Help your child brush his/her own teeth.
- Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste to brush your child's teeth when the child is 2 years of age and older.
- Start gentle flossing when two of your child's teeth begin to touch.
- Check child's teeth monthly for changes (such as white spots).
- Replace the toothbrush when you child has strep throat, recurring sore throats, or when bristles are worn.
- Set a good example by brushing your child's teeth along with your teeth.

# Basic Oral Health

## Age Two to Five Years



**Brush your child's teeth**



**Pea-sized amount**



**Floss teeth in contact**



**Check child's teeth monthly**



**Worn bristles**

**New bristles**



**Brush teeth together**

# Parents Should Brush Their Child's Teeth for Them

- Children don't have the motor skills necessary to brush correctly by themselves until around age 7 or 8.
- Parents should brush their child's teeth for them one time each day.
- Children should be encouraged to brush a second time each day, with parents supervising.
- It is normal for young children to cry and fuss during toothbrushing. Talking, singing, and distracting during toothbrushing helps.



# Parents Should Brush Their Child's Teeth for Them



**Normal crying and fussing during toothbrushing**



**Brush your child's teeth until age 7 or 8**

# Positioning Infants and Toddlers for Toothbrushing

- Place infants and toddlers in a position that allows you to see inside their mouth, and that is safe for the child:
  - (1) on the floor with their head in your lap,
  - (2) on the changing table, etc.
- Make sure to support child's head during toothbrushing.
- Have a partner help the brushing in the knee-to-knee position.

# Positioning Infants and Toddlers for Toothbrushing



**Child's head in your lap**



**On the changing table**



**Stabilize child's head**



**Knee-to-knee position**

# Positioning Older Children for Toothbrushing

- Place older children in a position that allows you to see inside their mouth and that is safe for the child.
- While you are sitting or standing, have the child back into you and lean their head back.

# Positioning Older Children for Toothbrushing



# **“Lift the Lip” and Look at the Four Top Teeth in the Front of the Mouth**

- “Lift the Child’s Lip” to better brush the four top teeth and look for the presence of plaque and, very importantly, the presence of early signs of cavities (white spots).
- Remember, preventing cavities takes just a few minutes each month. If you see any white spots or discoloration, contact your dentist or your child’s physician immediately.

# “Lift the Lip” and Look at the Four Top Teeth in the Front of the Mouth



# Fluoride

- Fluoride is a natural mineral that helps prevent tooth decay.
- Fluoride in community water fluoridation, where available, is the best way to prevent tooth decay.
- As soon as the first tooth appears, brush your child's teeth daily with fluoride toothpaste. Use the proper amount of toothpaste for your child's age:
  - Smear amount for children younger than 2 years of age
  - Pea-sized amount for children 2 years of age and older
- Fluoride supplements are recommended for children who are at a higher risk for tooth decay. Check with a physician or dentist to see if your child needs fluoride supplements.



# Fluoride

- Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay
- Fluoride in community water supply is best.
- Daily toothbrushing with fluoridated toothpaste.
- Fluoride supplements for high risk children.

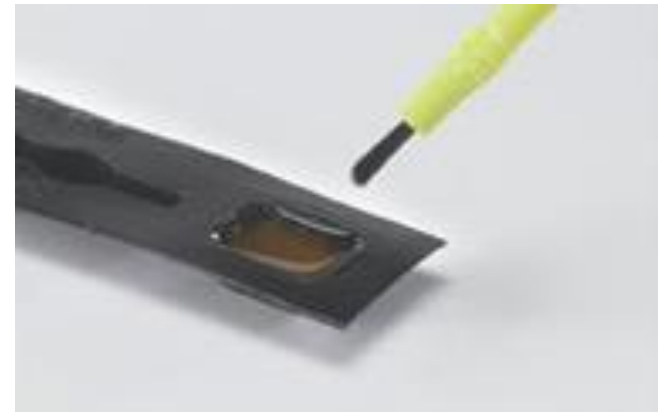
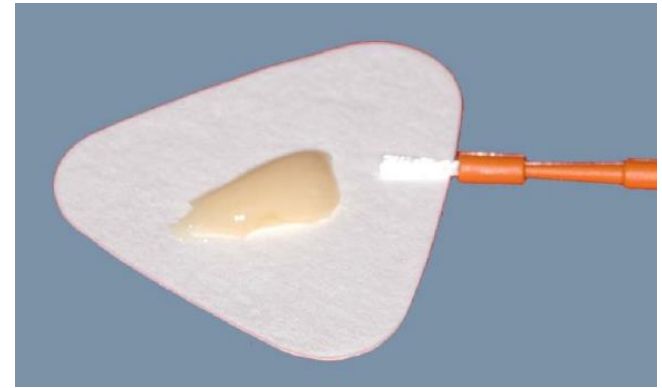


# Fluoride Varnish

- Fluoride varnish is:
  - A cavity fighter that can be used to prevent or stop tooth decay.
  - A thick liquid that can be white or yellow in color.
  - Safe for children
  - Quick and easy for health professionals to apply; usually only takes a couple minutes.
  - Pain free and dries on teeth immediately

# Fluoride Varnish

- Fluoride varnish is:
  - A cavity fighter
  - A thick liquid
  - Safe for children
  - Easy and fast to apply
  - Pain free



# Bottle and Sippy Cup Use

- Bottles and sippy cups allow liquids to remain in contact with the teeth for long periods of time.
- Avoid placing liquids in bottle or sippy cups that can cause cavities: juice, soda pop, chocolate milk, Kool-Aid, etc.
- Don't allow your child to carry a bottle or sippy cup throughout the day filled with sugary drinks. Instead, offer white milk or water.
- Children should never be put to bed with a bottle or sippy cup unless they contain plain water.
- Encourage your child to wean from the bottle by age 1.
- Limit juice to no more than 4 to 6 oz. daily for children 1 to 6 years. Encourage children to eat whole fruits.

# Bottle and Sippy Cup Use

- Sugary liquids can cause cavities.
- Water and white milk are fine throughout the day.
- Only water in sleeping bottles and sippy-cups.
- No more than 6 oz of juice daily.

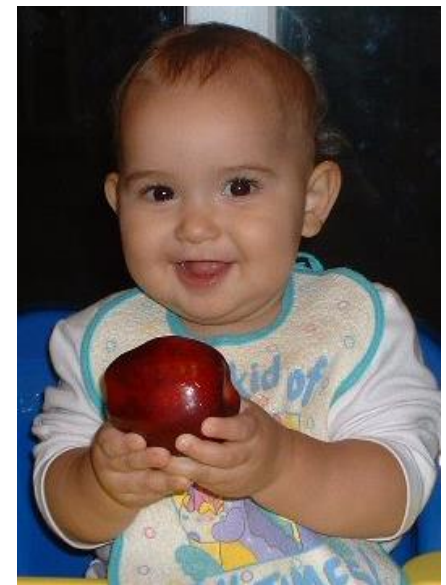


# Eat the Right Foods

- Give your child a healthy diet.
- Limit sweets and avoid sticky foods.
- Give healthy foods snacks from a variety of food groups:
  - Crisp, crunchy raw foods:
    - Carrot sticks, green pepper strips, apples, oranges, and other fruit.
  - Grain products:
    - Bread, tortilla chips, pretzels, crackers, unsweetened cereals
    - Milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese.
  - Meats.
- Any food can cause cavities if you do not brush:
  - Remember to brush teeth with fluoride toothpaste after snacks and meals to remove plaque (bacteria) from the teeth.

# Eat the Right Foods

- Healthy diet for strong teeth.
- Limit sweets.
- Avoid sticky foods.
- Any food can cause decay if you do not brush.



# Visit The Dentist Regularly

- Keep scheduled dental visits.
- Be positive and encourage others to be positive about the dental visit. Don't threaten the child with visiting the dentist.
- Be honest about what will happen. Answer your child's questions in a simple way.

“Why do I go to the dentist?”

“To see if your teeth are healthy.”

“What will the dentist do?”

“Look in your mouth. Count and brush your teeth.”

- With your help dental visits can be a pleasant experience for your child.



# Visit The Dentist Regularly



# Acknowledgements

Thanks to:

- Iowa Department of Education
- Iowa Department of Public Health, Oral Health Bureau
- Iowa Head Start Association
- Iowa Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Missouri Coalition for Oral Health Access
- The University of Iowa Department of Pediatric Dentistry

Funding for Healthy Smiles provided in part by

- Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation
- Mid-Iowa Health Foundation
- University of Iowa Department of Pediatric Dentistry

For more information contact:

Dr. Karin Weber-Gasparoni  
Department of Pediatric Dentistry  
The University of Iowa  
(319) 335-7478  
[karin-weber@uiowa.edu](mailto:karin-weber@uiowa.edu)