

References

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Importance of Your Child's Oral Health Care

**A Guide to Dental Services:
Keeping Your
Child's Teeth Healthy**

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Why is preventative oral health important for children?

Healthy permanent teeth in children and adolescents are established during the first years of life⁴. The earlier children begin to receive regular dental checkups, the healthier their mouths will stay throughout their lives¹. Visiting the dental clinic on a regular basis helps prevent tooth decay and cavities.

A full set of healthy teeth is important for many reasons:^{4,6}

- To chew food which helps with digestion
- To learn to speak correctly
- To help with future employment
- To help stay physically healthy

Did you know?

- Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among children in the United States. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 40 percent of children have decay by the time they reach kindergarten¹
- The development of cavities in primary teeth increases the risk of developing cavities in permanent teeth⁴
- Associations have been found between oral infections and heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and babies with low-birth weight⁵
- Absences from school caused by tooth pain were associated with poorer school performance but absences for routine care were not⁵

What can you do to ensure strong healthy teeth?

- Take your child to the dentist by age 1²
- Set a daily proper hygiene routine (brush teeth twice a day and floss once a day) with appropriate parental supervision and/or assistance⁴
- Eat a well-balanced diet of protein, fruits, and vegetables³
- Limit the intake of sweet and starchy foods and/or drinks. Try to eat or drink them only during mealtime⁴
- Change tooth brush 3-4 times a year³
- Use dental products recommended by your dentist⁴

Helpful reminders when scheduling a dental visit for your child³

- Schedule regular dental checkups
- Schedule your visit when your child is likely to be well rested and cooperative
- Never mention words such as, “hurt” or “pain” around your child when discussing a dental visit
- Keep personal dental experiences positive when speaking with your child
- Allow and encourage your child to discuss fear about dental visits

Tips on how to obtain a dental health provider

- Involve your child’s pediatrician, clinic or local public health department for assistance and/or recommendations
- Search for dental health clinics in your community online
- Call the dental health clinic and ensure they accept your insurance
- Ask if there are any requirements to see your child (i.e. Needing a prior authorization)
- Ask about the scheduling process
- Ask if they will accept sibling(s)
- Ask if any sedation services are offered