



HEALTHY SMILES

START AT HOME

Teach your kids the importance of good oral health.

Teaching your child about dental hygiene as soon as the first tooth comes in can lead to a lifetime of healthy dental habits.

The importance of brushing and flossing

When your child is small, he or she will need help learning how to care for their teeth and gums. Ideally, you'll brush their teeth at least until age three.* After that, your child should be able to brush his or her own teeth with your supervision.** Once you're comfortable with your child's brushing skills, he or she can become more independent.

Flossing is equally important. However, small children can't easily maneuver the floss between their teeth and gums. You will likely need to help your child until age 10 or 11.** Even then, you should supervise.



Dental decay is one of the most chronic infectious diseases among children in the United States. And it's completely preventable.***

See your dentist at the sign of the first tooth

Teaching your children good oral health from an early age can have lifelong benefits. And it's much easier to teach a young child good habits than it is to break an older child of bad ones. That's why it's up to you to start encouraging good oral hygiene, right from the start.

* American Dental Association. "Healthy Habits." www.mouthhealthy.org/en/babies-and-kids/healthy-habits. Accessed December 2, 2014.

** American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. "Frequently Asked Questions." www.aapd.org/resources/frequently_asked_questions/#36. Accessed December 2, 2014.

*** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (August 30, 2012.) "Children's oral health." Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/topics/child.htm.

You should take your child to see a pediatric dentist when the first tooth appears – or no later than his or her first birthday. Your dentist will show you how to protect and maintain your little one's dental health. Tooth decay can begin with your baby's very first tooth so see your dentist early to prevent dental disease and ensure your child remains cavity-free.***



Remember: Be a good role model for your kids by practicing good oral health habits yourself.

Simple tips for a happy, healthy mouth

1. Establish good oral health habits early.

- › **Brush.** Start using fluoride toothpaste when your child is 12 months old. Only use a portion the size of a grain of rice for children younger than three years old.** And use a pea-sized portion for children ages three to six.**
- › **Floss.** Begin as soon as the gaps between your child's teeth close.

2. Schedule regular dental visits.

Together, all the way.SM



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