



# 10 TIPS TO HELP THE CHILDREN IN YOUR LIFE KEEP A HEALTHY SMILE

We'll help you start strong with habits that can protect their smiles for a lifetime.

**Lead by example.** Show your kids that practicing good oral health is important and can be fun by practicing good oral health yourself.

**Choose a dentist that you and your family will like and trust.** It will make the experience more enjoyable for everyone.

**Take them to the dentist regularly** – usually every six months or as directed by your dentist – for routine cleanings and checkups. This is not only good for the mouth; it can also help your child build a comfort level with the dentist.

**Remind them to brush.** Always ask your children if they brushed their teeth before they leave for school and when they are getting ready for bed.

**Encourage them to brush at school.** A travel toothbrush can be easily packed in your child's backpack so that he or she can brush after snacks and lunch while at school.

**Teach the importance of flossing.** Flossing is just as important as brushing and may also help prevent gum disease. Gum disease may be associated with health complications later in life.

**Make sure they eat breakfast every day.** There's evidence that young people who eat a high protein breakfast have noticeable reductions in cravings for sweets later in the day.\*

**If they're going to drink soda, have them use a straw.** Doing so reduces their teeth's exposure to sugar.

**Reduce sugar in their diets.** Replace sugary snacks and drinks with healthy alternatives, such as fruit, cheese and crackers and water.

**Reward healthy habits.** Leave little treats from the "Tooth Fairy," every now and then, to reward your child for practicing good oral health.

**Together, all the way.®**



\*"Breakfast Research and Statistics" Mr. Breakfast (University of Missouri). August 2014 <[http://www.mrbreakfast.com/glossary\\_term.asp?glossaryID=152](http://www.mrbreakfast.com/glossary_term.asp?glossaryID=152)>

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