

Taking Care of Teeth

Oral Health in Children

Sometimes we forget that dental hygiene is a critical piece of overall health. Proper dental care should begin before your children even cut their first teeth. Make a habit of cleaning your baby's gums with a warm washcloth to clear away harmful bacteria.

As your child gets older, your doctor will apply protective sealants to the chewing surfaces of back teeth and any deep pits or grooves. Sealants can be painted directly on to teeth to protect areas that are hard to reach with a toothbrush and floss. The result is fewer cavities and happier kids.

Preventing Toothaches and Decay

Proper dental care can help prevent cavities and trips to the dentist, which are unwelcome by most children. The American Dental Association recommends taking your children to the dentist by their first birthday. The dentist can explain important brushing and flossing techniques and detect the potential for future problems like cavities. Your dentist can also apply topical fluoride to your children's gums before they have cut their teeth, which will help prevent cavities.

What are cavities anyway?

Cavities are holes in the teeth that can grow over time if not repaired. Most develop as a result of plaque on the teeth. This sticky film of bacteria can bind to teeth and cause the protective enamel around the tooth to decay.



Do cavities hurt?

An untreated cavity may cause pain when you eat something hot or cold. Over-the-counter medicine can help with pain, but it is important to see a dentist to have the cavity filled. ♥

In addition to visiting the dentist for regular cleanings and sealant applications, encourage your child to:

- brush twice every day
- floss regularly
- eat a balanced diet

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