

Oral Health for Healthy Children

Tooth decay (dental caries) affects children in the United States more than any other chronic infectious disease. Untreated tooth decay causes pain and infections that may lead to problems; such as eating, speaking, playing, and learning.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tell us that the good news is that tooth decay and other oral diseases that can affect children are preventable. The combination of dental sealants and fluoride has the potential to nearly eliminate tooth decay in school-age children.

What Parents and Caregivers Can Do

Here are some things you can do to ensure good oral health for your child:

- Encourage your children to eat regular nutritious meals and avoid frequent between-meal snacking.
- Protect your child's teeth with fluoride.
 - Use fluoride toothpaste. If your child is less than 7 years old, put only a pea-sized amount on their toothbrush.
 - If your drinking water is not fluoridated, talk to a dentist or physician about the best way to protect your child's teeth.
- Talk to your child's dentist about dental sealants. They protect teeth from decay.
- If you are pregnant, get prenatal care and eat a healthy diet. The diet should include folic acid to prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord and possibly cleft lip/palate.

Check out the following Web sites for more tips on children's oral health:

- [Infant Formula and Fluoridated Water](#). This page answers frequently asked questions (FAQ's) about mixing infant formula with fluoridated water.
- [Brush Up on Healthy Teeth](#). This is a health education campaign including a Brush Up Quiz for Parents, Tip Sheet, and Poster. [En español](#).

Information from the CDC at: <http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/topics/child.htm>