

# Children

Teeth are important at any age and caring for them starts with good habits from the beginning. A child can reach adulthood without suffering from tooth decay and other problems with good oral care and regular dental visits.

## **Diet and Your Child's Teeth**

Plaque is a sticky film of bacteria that forms on teeth. When not removed every day, it builds up. Plaque bacteria use sugar to make acid that attacks the outer surface of the teeth and causes it to break down, forming cavities.

Reducing sugary foods and drinks and also reducing the amount of snacks in between meals can help to prevent the acid attacks that cause cavities.

## **Brushing**

Brush teeth at least twice daily, flossing once a day.

Choose a child-sized toothbrush with soft bristles and replace it every three months.

Tell your child to spit out the toothpaste and do not swallow it. Children under six should use no more than a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste

Supervise children while they brush their teeth and encourage them to brush for at least two minutes, at least twice daily.

## **Floss Every Day**

Flossing is important to remove plaque from between the teeth where the toothbrush cannot reach. Flossing daily should begin as soon as your child has teeth that touch.

## **Fluoride**

Fluoride helps make teeth stronger and protect them from decay. It is a naturally-occurring mineral, and can be found in drinking water in most areas. It is found in most toothpaste, some mouth rinses, and can also be applied in the dental office. In some cases, fluoride supplements may be prescribed.

## **Protect Teeth with Sealants**

A sealant is a material the dentist applies to surfaces of back teeth. The sealant flows into the pits and grooves in the teeth where the tooth brush can't reach to protect them from plaque and acids.

## **Why Regular Dental Visits Are Important**

Regular dental visits for your child are important to check on oral hygiene, injuries, cavities or any other problems.

There is a very broad range of what is considered 'normal' development. Regular dental check ups are important in monitoring any issues with the development of baby teeth and adult teeth, as well as early recognition of any need for orthodontic treatment.

In some instances, it may be necessary to refer your child to a pediatric dentist for comprehensive treatment if they have a high level of anxiety or if extensive treatment is necessary.

## **Prevent Sports-Related Dental Injury**

Wearing a mouth guard can help prevent sports-related injury to teeth and surrounding tissues. Mouth guards can be custom made by your dentist, or bought at sporting goods stores ready-made or "boil and bite".