

## FEBRUARY IS CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

We celebrate **Children's Dental Health Month** because a child's oral health greatly impacts his or her overall health. Tooth problems like cavities and other bacterial infections can affect a child's confidence and success in school. And toothaches may cause pain, making it difficult to chew and obtain proper nutrition during important developmental years.

### HOW CAN WE HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP GREAT DENTAL HABITS?

Good habits begin in childhood, and it's our responsibility to help our children achieve great dental health every day! Let's discuss the **five most effective ways** we can help children develop the best habits for healthy teeth.

#### MAKE GOOD NUTRITION CHOICES

1. Children will often choose sweets if given the option. Though candy and sugary drinks may be fun on occasion, children don't understand the harm of these for their teeth. Encourage healthy options like fresh veggies, cheese, and nuts— great for our teeth and bodies!



**Let's encourage healthy snacks**  
*like fresh veggies, cheese and nuts!*



Save candy and sweets for special occasions!

#### STAY HYDRATED

2. Many parents give children fruit juice or sweetened milk to sip on between meals. Sugary drinks are often very acidic. When acidic foods or beverages stay on our teeth, it causes our enamel to erode and cavities to form. The best drink is always water!



**Always offer water first when our children are thirsty.**



Limit fruit juices to avoid cavities.

#### BRUSH WITH THE PROPER TECHNIQUE

3. The purpose of brushing our teeth is to remove plaque. Brushing our teeth correctly is a skill that takes time to learn. A parent should help until the child is old enough to hold their toothbrush correctly and brush every tooth in small circles.



**We can help until our children are old enough to brush correctly.**



Be patient. Proper brushing takes time to learn!

#### BRUSH AT THE PROPER FREQUENCY

4. We should teach children to brush their teeth twice each day at the minimum. The best times to brush are immediately after breakfast, and just before bedtime.



**Make brushing a part of our children's breakfast and bedtime routine everyday.**



We all may forget sometimes, so remind your children to brush twice each day.

#### KEEP CONSISTENT DENTAL VISITS

5. In order for children to understand the importance of their dental health, visiting the dentist every 6 months is a priority. Each visit promotes better oral health and lower dental anxiety.



**Children and adults should visit the dentist every 6 months to keep their smiles healthy.**



If your child shows signs of dental anxiety, talk to your dentist at their next visit.

### CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH: YOUR NEXT STEPS

If you have children, start today by talking with them about good dental habits. And remember, kids will often imitate what they see, so set a good example by practicing your own oral hygiene every day!