

How To Keep Your Kids Cavity-Free



Most parents do not realize that 90% of all dental problems are preventable. Today, it is entirely possible for your child to grow up without a single cavity. Parents who bring their children to a pediatric dentist by age 12 months get a huge head start in preventing cavities.

Here are the steps to take to help your kids grow up cavity-free.



- 1 Have your child's first visit to a pediatric dentist by the age of 12 months. The younger the age at the first visit, the better the chance of preventing cavities.
- 2 Children should have their teeth brushed for them until they are at least seven or eight years of age. Children do not have the dexterity or the attention span to adequately clean their own teeth. Begin flossing when the spaces between the back teeth close. You may need to floss your child's teeth beyond the ages of seven or eight. Floss holders make the job easier. Teeth should be brushed after breakfast, before bedtime, and after between-meal snacks.
- 3 Avoid using fluoride-containing toothpaste if your child is under age three. Young children swallow toothpaste and the ingested fluoride discolors the developing permanent front teeth. Foam from the toothpaste makes it more difficult to see the teeth. Besides, toothpaste does nothing to clean the teeth. All of the cleaning is done by the brush. Wetting the brush is as effective as using toothpaste!
- 4 Control your child's snacking; 98% of the foods children eat cause cavities. Fruit, milk, juice, pasta, crackers, bread, and even popcorn are as damaging to teeth as candy! Try and limit between-meal snacks to 3-4 per day. Having milk or juice is considered a snack. The size of the snack does not matter. One sip of milk will cause cavities as easily as eating an entire candy bar. Tooth-healthy snack foods include mozzarella string cheese, aged cheddar cheese, and Swiss cheese. These cheeses can actually repair the first stage of cavity formation.
- 5 Have a pediatric dentist place sealants on your child's back teeth. Sealants are durable plastic coatings that cover the deep grooves on the biting surfaces. They are absolutely painless to apply and can protect the teeth for five to ten years.
- 6 Be sure your child is getting the correct amount of fluoride. Public water provides the proper amount. Well water must be tested for fluoride content before additional fluoride can be prescribed by our office.

Barry D. Lyon, D.D.S. & Associates
Pediatric Dentistry
(410) 760-1212