



## Healthy Smiles - Key Educational Messages

### **Cavities**

Cavities are an infection caused by bacteria that produce acid on the teeth when they metabolize sugars. The infection is transmissible and preventable. **Prevention begins with good hygiene.**

### **Hygiene**

**Hand washing:** wet hands, apply soap, rub soap on palms, backs of hands and between all fingers. Rinse and dry

**Brushing:** 2-3 X each day, at least after breakfast and last thing at night. After snack when possible or rinse with water, swish and swallow or spit.

**Toothpaste:** apply pea size or tiny dab to dry brush. Instruct not to swallow.

**Technique:** soft brush angled up to gums, "wiggle, jiggle" 10 times each tooth, start on inside bottom using length of brush, outside bottom teeth, inside upper teeth, outside uppers, brush across tops of bottom teeth, bottoms of top teeth

**Brush tongue:** either straight down or in circles on whole surface of surface

**Flossing:** gently wiggle floss down side of tooth to just under the gum, then "hug" and lift up and out. Move and use new piece of floss for each tooth.

**Rinsing:** once child is able to swish and spit. Small amount of rinse with fluoride, swish to count of 10 on one side, count of 10 next side, count of 10 in front then spit out!

**Care of toothbrush:** change every 3 months or after illness. Each child has own brush, paste and cup. Rinse after use by holding under water count of 3, shake 3 times into sink. Instruct NOT to tap against side of sink or wave around. Air dry with tip upright

### **Dental Care**

Children seen by a dentist 2X a year. First visit around 12 month depending on risk. Pregnant women seen as soon as possible with plan for care individualized.

### **Nutrition**

Bacteria metabolize sugars. Each exposure results in 20 minutes of acid production. Focus on decreasing exposures and choosing teeth friendly foods and snacks.

Bottles discontinued by age 1. Sippy cup use limited to liquids at meal and snack times, other times water only.

Strip crowns are a more esthetic alternative to placing stainless steel crowns because they can be color-matched to your child's teeth. The material used in strip crowns is the same composite resin used in tooth-colored fillings, and mainly placed on primary incisors (top baby teeth) with severe tooth decay. Strip crowns, however, are not as durable as stainless steel crowns.

### **Exercise**

Choose some physical activity for each day and healthy snack to take to support energy. Drink tap water for hydration.