

**A Preventive Message From The Doctors and Staff
at
Ottawa Children's Dentistry**

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Pediatric dentists are the pediatricians of dentistry.

As the experts in dental development, pediatric dentists are uniquely qualified to assess your child's changing dental needs and protect your child's dental future. Drs. Wrobel, Nickerson, and Laun are the only licensed children's dental specialists in the Illinois Valley.

Because we specialize, we make children feel special.

Kids feel welcome here. Our office is designed for children and the entire dental team likes children.

More sugar in food doesn't mean more cavities.

The cavity-causing bacteria in the mouth can't tell the difference between a small or a large amount of sugar. Low-sugar foods – milk, fruits, even vegetables – can start the tooth decay process.

Cooked starches cause tooth decay.

Cooked starches – potato chips, corn flakes, crackers, bread, pasta – have decay-causing power equal to sugars. Research today shows that almost every meal or snack can lead to acid attacks on your child's teeth.

Your child doesn't have to avoid sticky sweets.

How sticky a food feels when you chew it does not relate to how long that food remains in the mouth. A caramel feels sticky, but it clears the mouth in minutes. A potato chip doesn't feel sticky, but it can remain in the mouth for hours.

The frequency of snacking is more important than the type of snack.

We can choose snacks based upon nutritional value and our children's preferences, as long as we limit the number of snacks and encourage good oral hygiene.

Snack in moderation.

Your child may snack three to four times a day if he or she brushes at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

Some foods have anti-cavity power.

Certain cheeses do not promote tooth decay and can even help heal early injury to tooth enamel. Other “friendly foods” are chocolate, licorice and peanuts.

Fluoride works right at the tooth’s surface.

Tiny quantities of fluoride in saliva prevent tooth decay. Even better, fluoride actually heals tiny breaks in tooth enamel and cures small cavities.

Fill your “fluoride reservoir” to prevent tooth decay.

Because fluoride stays in the mouth for a relatively long time, it works to protect your child’s teeth throughout the day. Brush twice a day, after breakfast and before bedtime, with an ADA-approved fluoride toothpaste.

Sealants help keep your child cavity-free.

Sealants protect the chewing surfaces of back teeth where four out of five cavities in children are found.

Early intervention can help prevent crowded teeth and bite problems.

As we watch children grow, we can identify malocclusions and actively intervene to guide the teeth as they emerge in the mouth. Many times, orthodontic treatment early on can prevent more extensive treatment later.

Your young athlete needs a mouth guard.

Mouth guards hold top priority as sports equipment. Tomorrow’s Olympic stars should wear mouth guards anytime they are in an activity with possible falls, head contact or flying equipment.

A common question new parents have is “When should my child first see a dentist?”

The short answer is “First visit by first birthday,” according to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. America’s pediatricians agree. Although the idea of such early dental visits is still surprising to many new parents, the infant visit is endorsed by leading national public health groups.

More than 1 in 4 children in the United States have cavities by the time they are 4 years old, sometimes as early as age 2. To prevent early childhood cavities, parents first have to find out their child’s risk developing cavities, then learn how to manage diet, hygiene, and fluoride to prevent problems before they start.

But cavities aren’t all that parents need to learn about their child’s dental health. The age 1 dental visit lets parents discuss:

- How to care for an infant’s or toddler’s mouth
- Appropriate use of fluoride for your child
- Oral habits, including finger and thumb sucking
- Ways to prevent oral and facial accidents and trauma
- Teething and developmental milestones
- The relationship between diet, oral health, and overuse of bottles and sippy cups

After this first visit, the dentist will suggest a schedule of follow-up visits. In the past, dentists typically recommended follow-up visits every six months. Now, dentists are increasingly tailoring children’s visits to their individual needs and risks. As your child grows, the dental team can share information that will help you prevent common oral problems.

Questions and Answers: New Concepts on Diet and Dental Health

Q: My daughter wants candy in her lunch box, but I tell her that candy is the number-one cause of tooth decay. Right, Doctor?

A: I congratulate you for making good oral health a priority in your family. It's true that we used to see candy and other high-sugar foods as the biggest enemy of healthy teeth in our children. But new research shows us that candy is not necessarily bad for teeth.

Q: But doesn't sugar cause tooth decay?

A: You're right, it does. But more sugar in food doesn't mean more cavities. The cavity-causing bacteria in the mouth can't tell the difference between a small or a large amount of sugar. It takes only a low concentration of sugar to get them started. Sneaking a tiny bite of frosting or eating a whole cake can cause the same amount of damage to your child's teeth. And sugar isn't just in candy. Milk, fruit and other foods contain sugars. Although many of these foods offer great nutritional value for your child, they also offer the potential of cavities.

Q: That doesn't make sense!

A: It's surprising to learn that even a minuscule amount of sugar can start the tooth decay process. Here's an analogy: Your car will start whether you have a large or small amount of gas in the tank. So will the bacteria start whether you have a large or small amount of sugar in the mouth. The bacteria in plaque use sugar and cooked starches to produce acid. The acid leads to loss of tooth mineral, which leads to tooth decay. So, the more frequently your child eats, the more frequently acid attacks the teeth, and the more likely cavities will form.

Q: I read that potato chips are as dangerous for teeth as sugar candy. Is that true?

A: Potato chips, corn flakes, crackers, bread and pasta are all examples of cooked starches. Research today shows that cooked starches and sugars have an almost equal potential to cause tooth decay. In fact, starchy foods are especially harmful to the teeth. It takes several hours for starches to break down into sugars that then dissolve and clear the mouth. The acid attacks continue until this process is complete OR the teeth are cleaned.

So you see, almost every meal or snack can lead to acid attacks on your child's teeth. When we give our children a bread crust or a small taste of what we're cooking for dinner, we don't think of it as a snack. But even one bite can start the chain of tooth decay.

Q: It sounds as if no foods are safe for a child's teeth. What's a parent to do?

A: Since we've learned that almost all foods have cavity-causing potential, we need to focus more on the frequency of snacking than on the type of snack to protect our children's dental

health. The good news is, as parents, we can limit the number of snacks and encourage good oral hygiene.

First, I recommend snacking in moderation-no more than three to four times a day. Second, your child should brush at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Third, provide a balanced diet. Good nutrition builds strong bones, decay-resistant teeth and healthy gums.

Q: You said, “Almost all foods can cause tooth decay.” Are there any good foods for teeth?

A: Yes! In fact, some foods have anti-cavity power. For example, certain cheese-including aged cheddar, Monterrey Jack and Swiss- do not promote tooth decay. Further, cheese can help protect against cavities. If cheese is served as a snack or after a snack, it can stimulate the flow of saliva and eliminate the production of harmful acids that cause tooth decay. Even better, new research suggests that cheese plus good oral hygiene can heal small breaks in tooth enamel where a cavity is about to form.

Other “friendly foods” are chocolate, licorice and peanuts. Licorice acts much as cheese does. It can help heal early injury to tooth enamel. Peanuts, chocolate and other cocoa products can block the build-up of plaque on the teeth.

Q: What about sugared soft drinks and chewing gum?

A: Chewing gum, whether sugared or sugarless, stimulates the flow of saliva and helps to clear cavity-causing bacteria from the teeth. So, sugarless or sugared gum after a meal or snack would do more good than harm. Sugarless gum in place of another type of snack would be an even better choice.

Sugared soft drinks get the cavity-causing process started in the same way as any food containing sugar or cooked starches. So, if you can't brush afterward, any sweetened drink is safer for teeth than potato chips, crackers or pretzels.

Q: I hate to say this, but when a doctor's advice changes so much, it makes you wonder what to believe. When will dentists make up their minds?

A: I understand how frustrating it is to do your best for your child's dental health, and then discover the rules have changed. Thousands of dental researchers all over the world are working to find out about how to keep your child's teeth healthy and attractive. My job is to stay current with the research and pass it on to you.

The prevalence of cavities is declining, and our children's teeth are healthier than ever before. It's new research, passed on by doctors and followed by parents, that has made these gains possible.

I'm not recommending that your child eat candy. I'm simply saying that almost every time your child puts food in her mouth; she runs a risk of tooth decay. But if she snacks in moderation and brushes twice a day, she has a good chance of staying cavity-free for a lifetime.

Q: Has the new research changed your advice on baby bottle tooth decay?

A: No, my advice on preventing cavities for your baby still holds true. Tooth decay is a special concern for parents who put their babies to sleep with a bottle. If your baby wants a bottle as a pacifier, give her only water. Milk, formula, fruit juice or any sweetened drink can cause rapid-attack tooth decay in a child who sleeps with a bottle.

Q: So what's the bottom line?

A: My prescription for helping your child be part of the cavity-free generation is:

1. Snack in moderation-three or four times a day
2. Brush twice a day with an ADA-approved toothpaste
3. Visit our office regularly
4. Get enough fluoride through drinking water, fluoride products or fluoride supplements.
5. Have sealants applied to the chewing surfaces of permanent back teeth soon after the teeth come in

DECAY-PREVENTION OPTIONS FOR PARENTS OF INFANTS

Clean your baby's teeth as soon as they appear. Cleaning can be done with a small soft toothbrush or face cloth.

Use a small amount of "baby" toothpaste (non-fluoride) until age 2, then begin using a grain of rice size smear of fluoride toothpaste.

Hold your baby when feeding him or her, then lay the baby down to sleep; if the baby awakens, give him or her water, not milk or juice.

Limit the time your child spends in sipping and snacking, because the longer he or she takes, the greater the chance of decay. (See sippy cup below)

Offer no more than three or four snacks per day.

USE OF THE SIPPY CUP

The fact that caries has increased dramatically in recent years, particularly among preschool children, at this point is undisputable. As one would expect, the search is now on for the culprits in this epidemic. We are convinced that one of the major contributors to this increase walks into our office daily in the hands of virtually every toddler – the "sippy cup".

When you reduce caries to its simplest terms-bacteria plus sugar yields acid that produces caries-the link is obvious. Sippy cups have evolved from a tool to prevent spills to a form of "super pacifier". Children are allowed to wander around, sometimes all day long, with an on-demand supply of juice, soda or any other sugary liquid. Although parents for the most part are fully aware of the dangers of prolonged bottle feeding, few make the connection that the same dangers can exist with prolonged and frequent sippy cup use. Until recently, the dangers of sippy cups have been mostly ignored by both our profession and sippy cup manufactures in general. Although we are happy to report that at least one manufacturer, Easiflow, has now begun providing detailed usage and warning information, there is a long way to go on the education front.

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry 2.5 million children under age four have decay. The Associated Press has reported that tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease and that half of all first graders already have decay. With children missing over 50 million hours of school annually and children in pain due to dental caries winding up more and more in our nation's emergency rooms, it is clear that this recent trend is not without serious consequences. Although the case of this upswing in early childhood caries is certainly multifactorial, our opinion is that one of the major contributors to the increase is the inappropriate use of the sippy cup.

HOW TO BRUSH CORRECTLY.

THE CORRECT ANGLE



Place brush at 45° angle, aiming bristles into the margin between teeth and gums.

CORRECT BRUSHING ACTION

Vibrate or jiggle brush head gently while the tips of the filaments remain in more or less the same place.

Spend about 10 seconds on each tooth before moving to the next.



INNER SURFACES

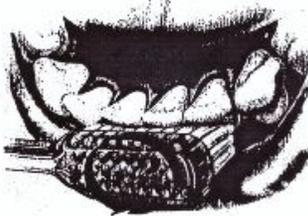


Clean upper and lower side teeth in the same manner.

For inside top front teeth, tilt the brush as shown in diagram, and clean teeth using correct brushing action.

Repeat for inside bottom front teeth.

OUTER SURFACES



Using the correct angle and brushing action, clean all outer surfaces of upper and lower teeth.

BITING SURFACES

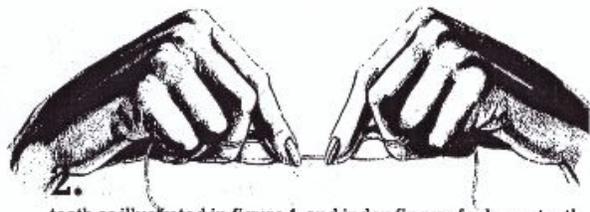


Use a back and forth stroke with moderate force to clean both upper and lower teeth.

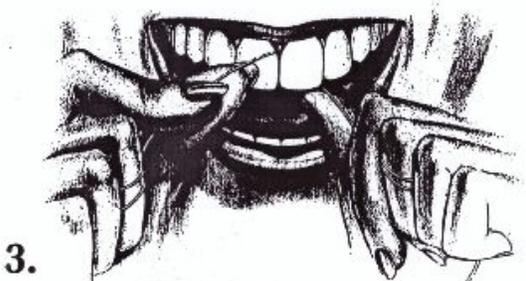
HOW TO FLOSS CORRECTLY.



1. Take about 20 inches of floss and wrap the ends around your middle fingers. Use thumbs to guide floss on upper



2. teeth as illustrated in figure 1, and index fingers for lower teeth as illustrated in figure 2.



3. Work floss gently and carefully between the teeth but avoid "snapping" floss against gums. Gently curve floss around tooth and under gum line. Move floss



4. straight up and down each tooth to scrape away harmful plaque as shown here in illustrations 3 and 4 for both top and bottom teeth. Floss each tooth thoroughly.

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Save That Tooth

Emergency Procedures for Knocked-out Permanent Teeth

A *permanent* tooth that is knocked-out can be saved by quick careful action.

Treatment by your dentist within the first 30 minutes is critical.

To save the tooth, follow these important steps:



1. Rinse the tooth *gently* in water.
Do Not Scrub



2. If possible, insert and hold the tooth in the socket. If you cannot insert the tooth, place it in a container of cool water or milk.



3. Call your dentist **immediately**