

LIFETIME SMILES BEGIN EARLY



TIPS FOR HEALTHY TEETH

5 YEARS TO 10 YEARS

* **Brush!** Help your child brush his or her teeth with fluoride toothpaste and floss daily. Help brush your child's teeth twice a day with a small dab of fluoride toothpaste on a small, soft bristled toothbrush. The best times to brush are before bed and after breakfast. Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste. By age 7 or 8, your child can brush on his or her own, but should still be supervised.

* **Eat well.** Serve healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products and dairy products (milk, cheese and unsweetened yogurt) for meals and snacks. Limit eating between meals. Keep sweet foods like cakes, pastries and candy for special treats, not everyday.

* **Rethink the drink.** Give your child milk, water or 100 percent fruit juice with meals. Avoid giving Kool-Aid, Gatorade, Sunny Delight, Capri Sun, soda or other sweet drinks to your child – they cause cavities.

* **Take your child to the dentist.** Children should see the dentist at least once a year, more often if they have had cavities.

* **Ask your dentist if your child needs fluoride varnish or gel.** Fluoride varnish or gel is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and help stop cavities that have already started.

* **Ask your dentist if your child needs dental sealants.** Dental sealants are a thin plastic coating applied to the pits and fissures on the chewing surfaces of the teeth to prevent tooth decay.

* **Ask your dentist to evaluate your child's bite.** Talk with your dentist about your child's need to be evaluated for braces.

* **Protect your child's teeth from injury.** Use an appropriate car safety seat when riding in a car until your car's safety belt fits properly on your child. Ensure your child wears a helmet when riding a bicycle and wears protective gear when participating in physical activities that could potentially result in injury to the mouth, such as biking, skateboarding, skating, or playing baseball, football or soccer.

* **Avoid tobacco use.** Teach your child about the dangers of tobacco use.



For more information, contact:
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DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

Adapted with permission from materials funded by the First 5 Children and Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County, Calif.