

## *Tips To Keep Your Child's Teeth Healthy*

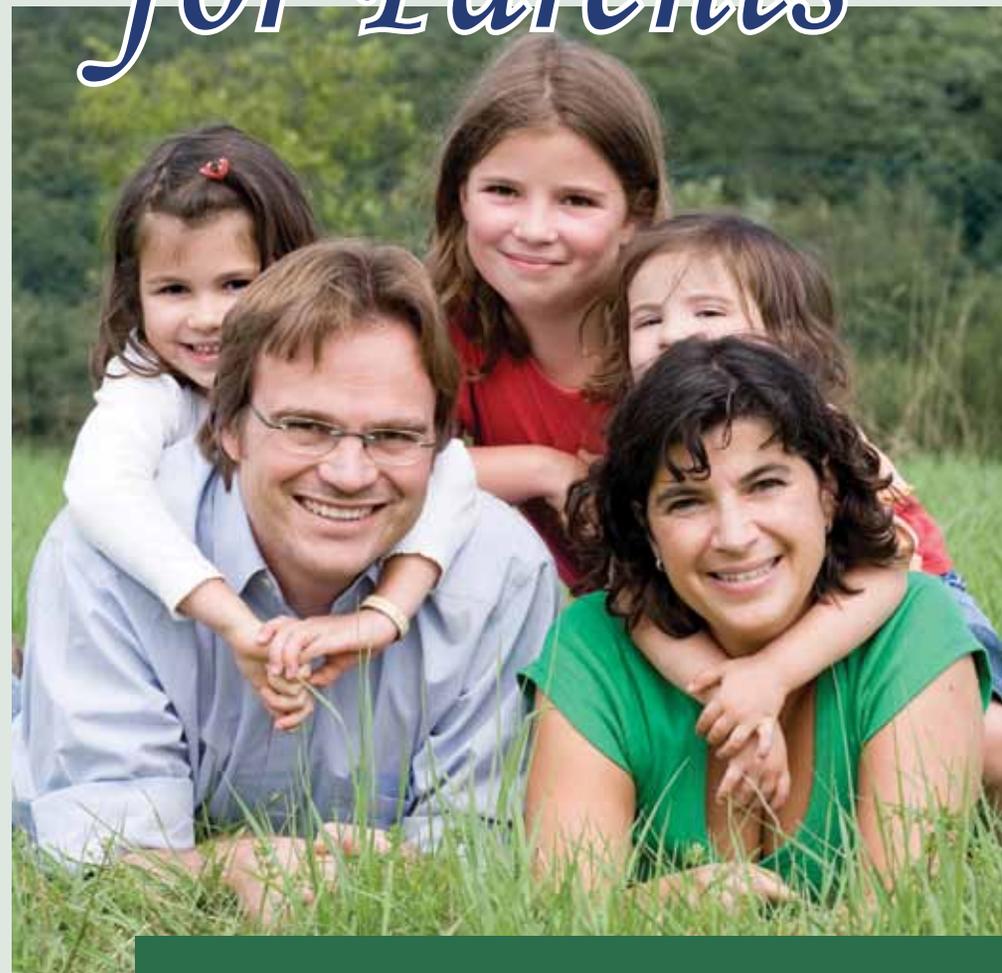
- ◆ Clean your child's mouth after each feeding with a clean, soft cloth, and start brushing with a soft bristled toothbrush after the first tooth comes in.
- ◆ Help your child brush and floss every day, until he or she is able to brush and floss his or her own teeth, usually around age 7 or 8.
- ◆ Take your child for their first dental visit around age 1. Continue regular check-ups to prevent tooth decay and find any problems early.
- ◆ Around age 2, start brushing with small amount of fluoridated toothpaste (about a pea size). Be sure to have your child spit the toothpaste out after brushing.
- ◆ Drink water with the right amount of fluoride. If your water does not have the right amount of fluoride, contact your doctor or dentist to determine if your child would benefit from a fluoride supplement.



*In North Dakota, 56 percent of children in the third grade have experienced tooth decay.*



# *Fluoride Facts for Parents*



*Fluoride helps make teeth stronger and prevent cavities.*

## Fluoride in Water

One way to get fluoride is through drinking water. Some cities and towns have naturally occurring fluoride in their water and some add fluoride to their public water supply. To find out if your water system has the right amount of fluoride to prevent tooth decay, go to My Waters Fluoride at

[apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MWF/CountyDataV.asp?State=ND](https://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MWF/CountyDataV.asp?State=ND), or contact the Oral Health Program at 701.328.4930 or 800.472.2286 (toll-free).

Some private wells contain fluoride naturally. If you get your water from a well or spring, you should have your water tested to determine the amount of fluoride in it. You can get your water tested by requesting a test kit from the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Laboratory Services at 701.328.6142. The cost of the fluoride test is \$16.48 and it takes about one week to complete the test.



## Community Water Fluoridation – Safe and Effective

Fluoride added to community drinking water in North Dakota at a concentration of 1.0 to 1.2 parts per million repeatedly has been shown to be a safe, inexpensive and extremely effective method of preventing tooth decay. Studies have shown that people in communities with fluoridated water have 20 to 40 percent less tooth decay than those in communities without fluoridated water. Community water fluoridation benefits everyone in the community, regardless of age, educational level or income. Fluoridation provides protection against tooth decay for children who have limited access to preventive dental care.

## Other Ways to Get Fluoride

If your drinking water does not have the right amount of fluoride in it, you can protect your teeth in other ways.

- ◆ You can get a prescription for fluoride drops or tablets from your doctor or dentist.
- ◆ Fluoride mouthrinses and toothpaste also help prevent cavities. Use a toothpaste with low or no fluoride until age 2. Around age 2, start using a small pea-size dab of toothpaste. Even a tiny smear is enough for children up to age 6. Make sure your child spits out the toothpaste after brushing and does not swallow it. Fluoride mouthrinses can be used for children older than 6.



- ◆ Fluoride varnish and topical fluoride treatments also can be applied to your child's teeth to prevent cavities. Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth by a health professional to help prevent new cavities and help stop those that have already started. Topical fluoride treatments can be applied by your child's dentist or dental hygienist at regular dental appointment to help prevent cavities.

