

Tooth Tips for Preschoolers



DID YOU KNOW . . .

Baby teeth are important for your child's overall health and development? Many parents do not worry much about their children's baby (primary) teeth because they think that they are "just baby teeth" and will fall out anyway. **Baby teeth have a purpose!** They allow children to eat, speak properly, hold space for permanent teeth and guide the growth of the face. And dental problems *can* hurt!

- Serve a variety of nutritious foods at meals and set snack times, limiting sweets and sugary foods. Allowing children to "graze" all day leaves food on the teeth and, combined with bacteria, will attack the enamel (hard, outer white area of the tooth) causing cavities.
- If your child tends to be thirsty, offer water in a sippy cup. Providing milk and juice in a sippy cup can cause "baby bottle rot" by allowing liquids to pool around the front teeth, breaking down the enamel and causing cavities. Milk and juice are best served at meals with a "big kid cup."
- Clean your child's teeth at least twice a day with a small, soft toothbrush and a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste, especially before bedtime. If a brush and paste are not available, have your child rinse their mouth with water.
- Schedule a dental exam every six months. If a dentist is not available, ask your child's doctor or nurse to check out your child's teeth for signs of problems.

Make brushing fun by singing while brushing your child's teeth! Here's a suggestion:

A-Brushing We Will Go (Tune: A-Hunting We Will Go)

A-brushing we will go
A-brushing we will go
My smile goes up
My smile goes down
A-brushing we will go
A-brushing we will go
(Repeat several times to cover all teeth)



For more information on children's dental care or how to access dental care in west central Minnesota see our website www.wcif.org/?ECDN

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