

FROM DROOL TO SCHOOL



Caring for your child's oral health from
the drool years through the school years

Brought to you by:

Delta Dental Foundation

An affiliate of Delta Dental of Michigan,
Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina

DELTA DENTAL FOUNDATION





THE DROOL YEARS

Newborns and Infants





A mom's oral health (the health of her teeth and mouth) may affect her baby even before it's born. Studies show that gum disease could be a risk factor for preterm, low birth weight babies.¹ Further, research suggests that infants and young children can get cavity-causing bacteria from their mothers, which means that a mom's oral health problems can become her child's if she doesn't take care of them.²

Here are a few other tips for good oral health during pregnancy:

- Brush with fluoride toothpaste two times a day, and floss once a day.
- Get a new toothbrush every three to four months (more often if frayed), and do not share it.
- If you vomit, rinse your mouth with water to prevent stomach acids from attacking your teeth.
- Make sure to eat a variety of healthy foods, and drink water or milk instead of juice or soda pop.

A large, solid blue silhouette of a pregnant woman, shown in profile from the waist up. She is facing left, and her belly is prominent. A white dotted line represents a necklace around her neck. The text is written across her belly area.

Moms-to-be should schedule a dental visit for a checkup and cleaning within the first six months of pregnancy.



BEFORE TEETH EVEN APPEAR

Even though you can't see them, all 20 primary (baby) teeth are present in the jaws at birth. As a result, good oral health habits should start before a baby's first tooth even appears.

Start off right:



- **Massage baby's gums.** Take a damp washcloth and lightly rub/massage your baby's gums after each feeding to keep the mouth and gums clean and healthy.
- **Keep an eye on pacifiers and bottles.** Talk to your dentist about which type of bottle nipples he or she recommends, because they can affect how muscles develop in a baby's mouth.
- **Stop the spread of germs.** Don't share your cups or silverware with your baby. Sharing not only spreads germs that cause illness, but also cavity-causing bacteria.



Teething usually starts at around 6 months of age when the front four teeth usually push through the gums. However, some babies may not get a first tooth until 12 or 14 months.

During teething, babies may begin to drool more heavily and become fussy due to sore or tender gums.

To ease your baby's tender gums:

- Lightly massage sore gums with moist gauze or a clean finger.
- Try offering cool relief like a teething ring or the back of a small spoon dipped in cool water or a cool, wet washcloth.
- Brush gums and teeth gently with a child-sized soft toothbrush and water.

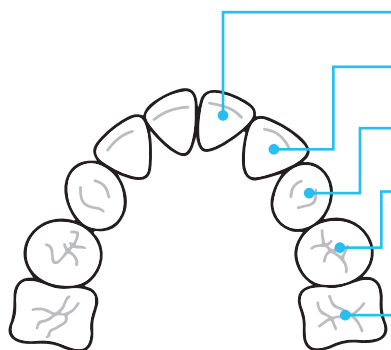
A large, stylized green baby stroller with a canopy and wheels, positioned in the lower right corner of the page.

During teething time, a baby is more likely to bite or gnaw on small objects. Be sure not to give your baby any toys or items that could break or fall apart, as pieces could cause choking.



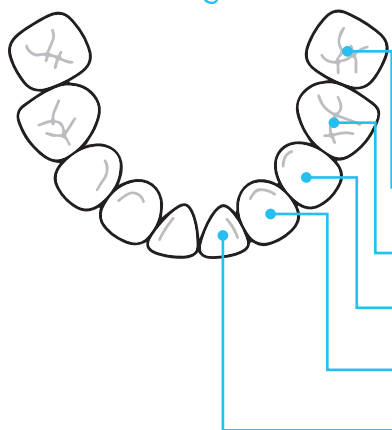
TEETHING CHART

When do certain baby teeth start showing up in a child's mouth? Use the chart below to help keep track of when new baby teeth should be arriving.



Upper Teeth	Baby Teeth	
	Come In	Fall Out
Central Incisor	8-12 mos.	6-7 yrs.
Lateral Incisor	9-13 mos.	7-8 yrs.
Canine (Cuspid)	16-22 mos.	10-12 yrs.
First Molar	13-19 mos.	9-11 yrs.
Second Molar	22-33 mos.	10-12 yrs.

20 baby teeth



Lower Teeth	Baby Teeth	
	Come In	Fall Out
Second Molar	23-31 mos.	10-12 yrs.
First Molar	14-18 mos.	9-11 yrs.
Canine (Cuspid)	17-23 mos.	9-12 yrs.
Lateral Incisor	10-16 mos.	7-8 yrs.
Central Incisor	6-10 mos.	6-7 yrs.



Why so early?

By visiting the dentist early, your child can get to know the dentist, and the dentist will be able to learn about your child's dental needs before problems occur. Your child will feel better about the dentist if the first visit is a positive, happy experience as opposed to one that is scary or for a painful emergency.

What kind of dentist should a child see?

Most often, young children will see either a pediatric dentist or a family dentist. A pediatric dentist is a dentist that has been specially trained to see children of all ages. A family dentist may see children as well as older family members, such as parents or grandparents. The choice is up to you.

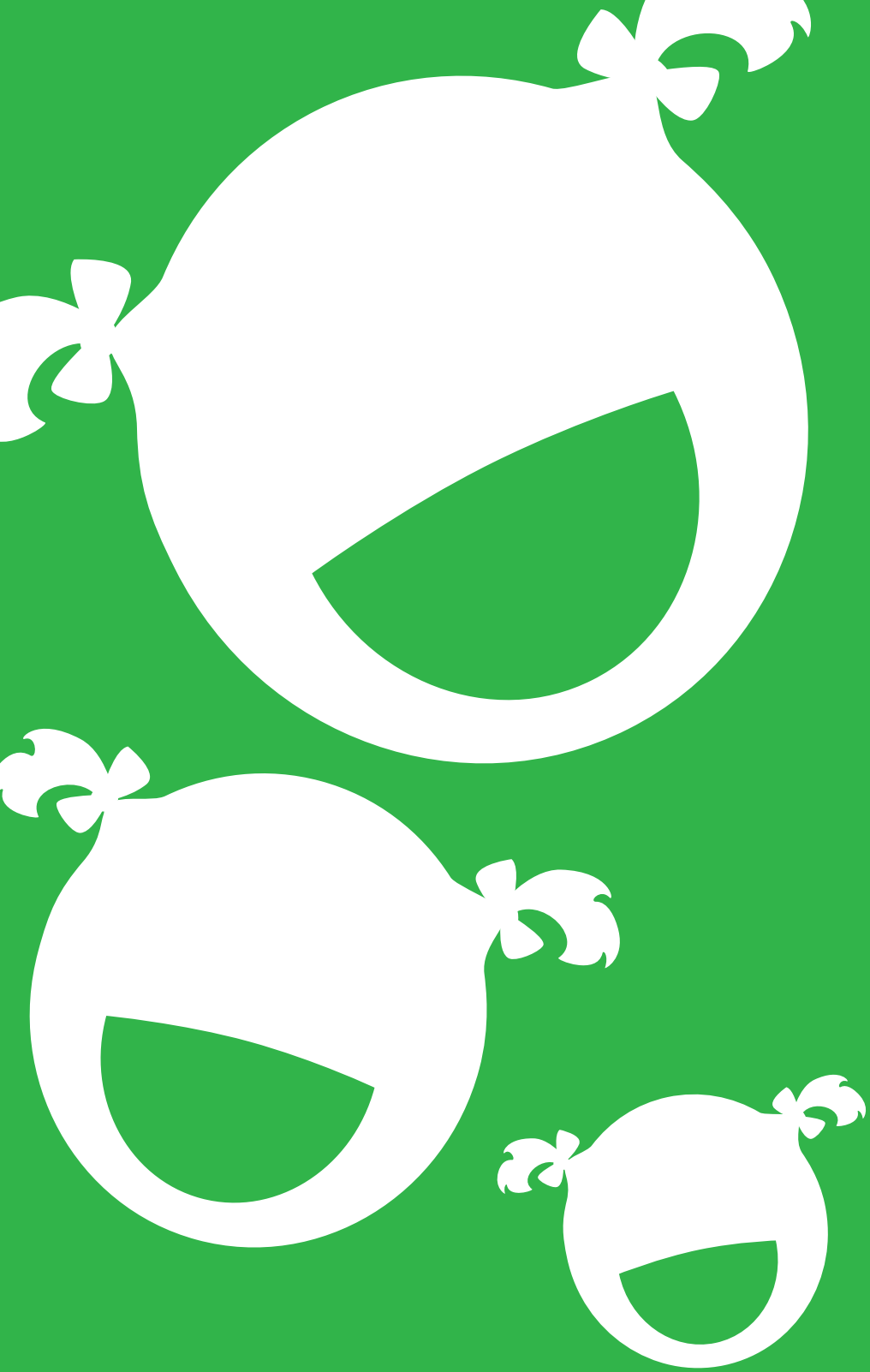
To find a kid-friendly dentist in your area, visit the website of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry at www.aapd.org, or ask your pediatrician, co-workers or friends with young children for a referral.



What can you expect?

- The dentist will have you stay with your baby.
- The dentist will examine your baby's mouth.
- The dentist will talk with you.







Primary (baby) teeth are more important than you may think.

They make space in the mouth for permanent (adult) teeth and can help children develop clear speech. Unhealthy baby teeth can spread bacteria to the healthy permanent teeth underneath.

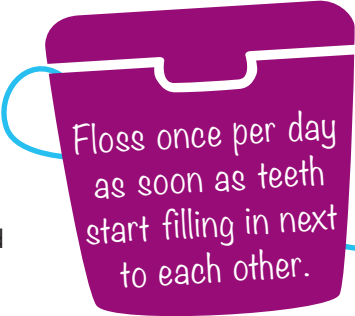
It's important to teach about good brushing habits before your child's permanent teeth appear, and it's never too early to start!

Be sure to visit the dentist every year

Once children reach preschool age, it's time for them to visit the dentist at least once a year for a checkup. Believe it or not, more than half of 5- to 9-year-old children have at least one cavity or filling.³ Good brushing habits and seeing a dentist twice a year can go a long way toward preventing cavities.

To develop good brushing habits:

- Use a soft, child-sized toothbrush.
- Brush two times a day for two minutes.
- Brush tongue to get rid of germs and freshen breath.
- Use fluoride toothpaste—start with a smear (the size of a grain of rice) until your child is 3. Increase toothpaste to the size of a pea until age 6. After that, increase the amount as your child ages.
- Remember: The last thing to touch your child's teeth before bedtime should be a toothbrush or water (not a snack)!



Floss once per day
as soon as teeth
start filling in next
to each other.

Until children are about 6, they don't have the fine motor skills to brush well enough to stop cavities. It's OK to let young children brush their own teeth for practice, with an adult following up to make sure all teeth are clean.



THE DENTIST IS OUR FRIEND

The good news about cavities is that they can be stopped—and your dentist plays a big role in keeping your child's teeth healthy. The key to healthy teeth is to take care of them at home by brushing, limiting sugar and making regular trips to the dentist. When parents and their dentist work together to keep children's teeth healthy, trips to the dentist for checkups and cleanings will be fun and enjoyable.

To help dental visits go smoothly:

- Schedule visits at the time of day that your child will be at his or her best—avoid nap time and feeding times.
- If you get scared about going to the dentist, try not to show your worries—kids have a way of picking up on what their parents are feeling.
- Take an extra diaper and a snack.
- Take a favorite blanket and stuffed animal or other toy to help your toddler feel more comfortable and safe.
- A little fussing is OK—you'd be surprised at how well most children handle their first visit.
- Tell your child about the importance of healthy teeth and gums, and how the dentist is a friendly doctor who helps with this. Talk about how we use our healthy teeth for smiling, singing, talking and eating healthy food.
- It's normal for children to feel anxious to see their doctor or dentist. Dentists who treat children know how to help them feel more relaxed and at ease.
- Read your child books about visiting the dentist.



Sucking is natural, and lots of children suck on fingers, thumbs, pacifiers, baby bottles and other objects to relax or feel more secure. However, problems with tooth alignment and bite could result if sucking becomes a habit that goes on for too long.

- **Baby bottles**—Wean your child off the bottle at around 12 to 18 months old. Kids that use bottles past this age are more likely to develop tooth decay and have a greater chance of becoming obese because they take in more calories.⁴
- **Pay attention to thumb sucking and pacifier use.** Though common in toddlers, if it continues after age 4, it can alter how your child's teeth and jaws develop.
- **Don't let kids carry around sippy cups full of sugary liquids.** While sippy cups are OK for toddlers, it's important that they not sip for long periods of time or be put down for a nap with a sippy cup containing juice, milk or other sweetened drinks because it can lead to cavities.





Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally and can help prevent cavities by making the surface of teeth (enamel) stronger.

How can your child get fluoride?

- **Drinking water**—Drinking fluoridated tap water is a great way to get fluoride. Though fluoride is found naturally in most all water sources, it is not always at a level high enough to prevent cavities. Water is “fluoridated” when the amount of fluoride in a community’s water system is adjusted to a level that will prevent tooth decay.

Tap water is generally better for kids’ teeth than bottled water because it contains fluoride.

You can contact your local health department to find out if your community’s water is fluoridated.

- **Fluoridated toothpaste and mouthwash**—For children younger than 3, use no more than a smear (the size of a grain of rice) of toothpaste, and for children ages 3 to 6 use a pea-sized amount. After that, increase as your child ages.

Fluoridated mouthwash should only be used by children ages 6 and older, as younger children may swallow it rather than swishing and spitting it out.

- **Fluoride application**—Your dentist may apply a fluoride gel, foam or rinse directly to the teeth if your child is likely to get cavities. Ask your dentist about fluoride at your next visit.





Eating right is important for a healthy body and mouth, and it's never too early to help your child learn good eating habits.

When deciding what to feed your hungry toddler or preschooler:

- **Limit snacks, and read the labels.** Many snack foods are high in fat and calories and contain a lot of sugar, which can cause cavities. Be sure to read labels and give your child healthy, low-fat snacks, such as fruits and vegetables, cheese cubes, whole grain cereal and yogurt.
- **Swap soda pop and juice for milk and water.** Soda pop and fruit juice can contain a lot of sugar. The longer kids' teeth are exposed to this sugar, the more tooth decay can happen!
- **Choose foods rich in vitamins and calcium.** These help teeth and gums stay healthy and grow strong. Great examples of healthy snack options are fresh fruits and vegetables and dairy products such as low-fat yogurt and cheese.
- **Avoid chewy fruit snacks and sugared cereals.** Both of these items contain high levels of sugar that can lead to cavities. In addition, fruit snacks can stick to teeth and cause tooth decay.

Did you know?

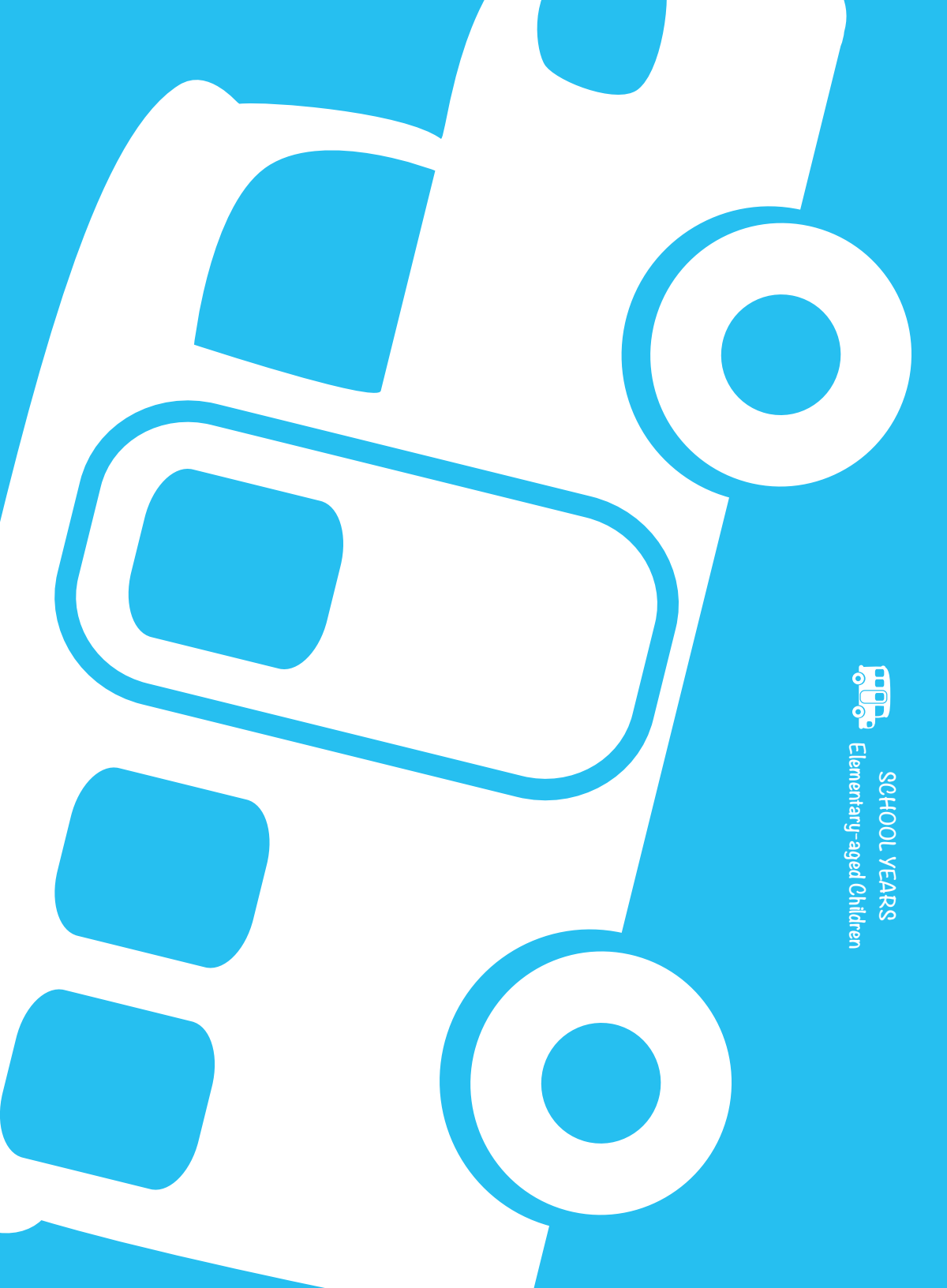
Four grams of sugar is equal to one teaspoon!







SCHOOL YEARS
Elementary-aged Children





As children grow, they take great pride in doing things for themselves, including brushing and flossing on their own. However, it's still important for parents to make sure they are being done right!

Remember:

- **Brush twice a day for two minutes each time.** Brushing should take place in small circular motions across the teeth and gums. Lightly brushing the tongue can help get rid of bad breath.
- **Floss every day.** Teach kids to start in the same place.
- **Children older than 6 should use a fluoride mouthwash daily.** The mouthwash should be swished in the mouth for 30 to 60 seconds and then spit out.



Two times a day, two minutes each time



Once every day



Daily for 30 to 60 seconds

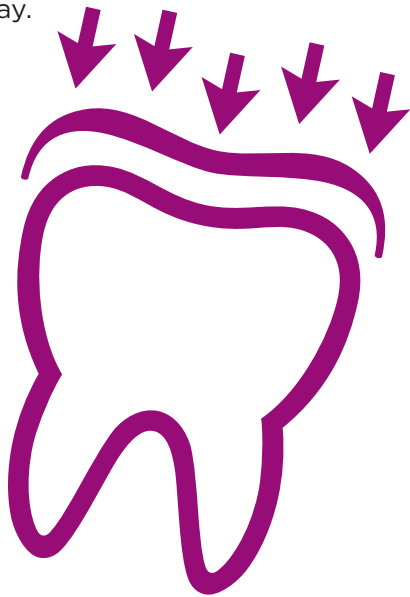


SEALANTS SAVE TEETH

Sealants are an easy, painless way to help protect children's teeth from decay.

Sealants are thin plastic coatings that seal off the dips and grooves on the biting surface of back teeth (molars) so that germs and food can't get caught and cause decay.

Getting sealants is easy and painless. First, the tooth to be sealed is cleaned, and a special gel is put on it. Then the tooth is washed off and dried, and then the sealant is painted on the tooth. A special light is used to help the sealant harden. Sealants last for about 5 to 10 years, so check with your dentist to see when they need to be reapplied.⁵



For more information about sealants, check with your child's dentist.



Make a dental visit part of your child's back-to-school routine!

There are plenty of items to check off on the back-to-school list—school supply shopping, new clothes, doctor visits, haircuts, etc., but no back-to-school checklist should be complete without a visit to the dentist. **A dental checkup should be part of a child's back-to-school routine, along with immunizations and a yearly physical.** By making a dental visit part of your yearly school routine, it's easy to make sure your child's oral health is in top shape, and he or she is ready for the school year ahead.





Packing a healthy school lunch for your child every morning can be tricky. A healthy, well-balanced lunch can help kids stay focused during the day and also help keep their teeth cavity-free.

Make these a part of your child's school lunch:

- **Fresh fruits and vegetables**—Go for fresh, healthy options such as baby carrots, grapes, apple chunks and orange sections.
- **Dairy products**—Milk, low-fat yogurt and cheese are great choices. Be sure to read labels, because some products that are specifically marketed to children can be high in fat and sugar.
- **Protein**—Turkey, roast beef, cheese or peanut butter are good choices for a sandwich. Use whole grain bread, and try to sneak in some lettuce and tomato!
- **Water**—Fluoridated water is a great choice for lunch. Drinks such as soda pop, juice and sports drinks can contain a lot of empty calories and high levels of sugar, which can cause tooth decay.
- **Toothbrush**—Brushing after lunch is a great idea, but even a quick rinse with water can reduce the amount of sugar left behind on teeth.





You wouldn't eat 17 packets of sugar—why would you drink them?

If your children are drinking soda pop, juice or fruit drinks, chocolate milk, or sports and energy drinks, they are probably drinking a lot of added sugar!

A typical 20-ounce soda pop or juice or fruit drink contains 15 to 18 teaspoons of sugar—as much as in three chocolate candy bars!

Drinking sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) is not good for the mouth or the body.

- Drinking soda pop nearly doubles the risk of cavities for children.
- Drinking a 12-ounce can of soda pop each day increases a child's chance of becoming obese by 60 percent.
- People who drink one or two cans of soda pop each day have a 26 percent greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes.





RETHINK YOUR DRINK—CHOOSE WATER!

Limit juice—EAT your fruit!

Despite having more nutrients and containing only natural (not added) sugar, 100 percent fruit juice typically contains as much sugar and as many calories as soda pop.

Recommended daily limits for added sugar.



**Newborns
and Infants**

0 tsp.
(0g)



**Toddlers and
Preschoolers**

4 tsp.
(16g)



**Children
Ages 4–8**

3 tsp.
(12g)



**Pre-teens and
Teenagers**

5–8 tsp.
(20–32g)



Adult Women

6 tsp.
(24g)



Adult Men

9 tsp.
(36g)



Dental emergencies are common among active kids. Be prepared by keeping the dentist's phone number handy.

If gums are injured or a baby tooth is loosened or knocked out, follow these steps:

- Don't pull out a loose tooth that is still attached. Keep the tooth in the socket, and call your dentist.
- If there is bleeding, apply pressure with a piece of cold, wet gauze.
- Watch for swelling of the gums, pain, fever or a change in the color of the tooth. If you see these, call your dentist.

For a chipped or broken permanent tooth:

- Collect all pieces of the tooth, and rinse your child's mouth with water. Call your dentist right away.

If a permanent tooth is knocked out:

Go to the dentist right away after following the steps below.

- Find the tooth. Hold it by the top—**not by the root**.
- Place the tooth in a container of milk or your child's saliva (spit) or between your lower lip and gum. **Do not store the tooth in tap water.**
- For older kids, try to place the tooth back in the socket **without touching the root**. Have your child bite down on gauze to help keep it in place.
- If the tooth is stored in a container, have your child bite down on a gauze to help relieve bleeding and pain.
- The quicker you can get to the dentist, the better the chance of saving the tooth and re-implanting it in the mouth.

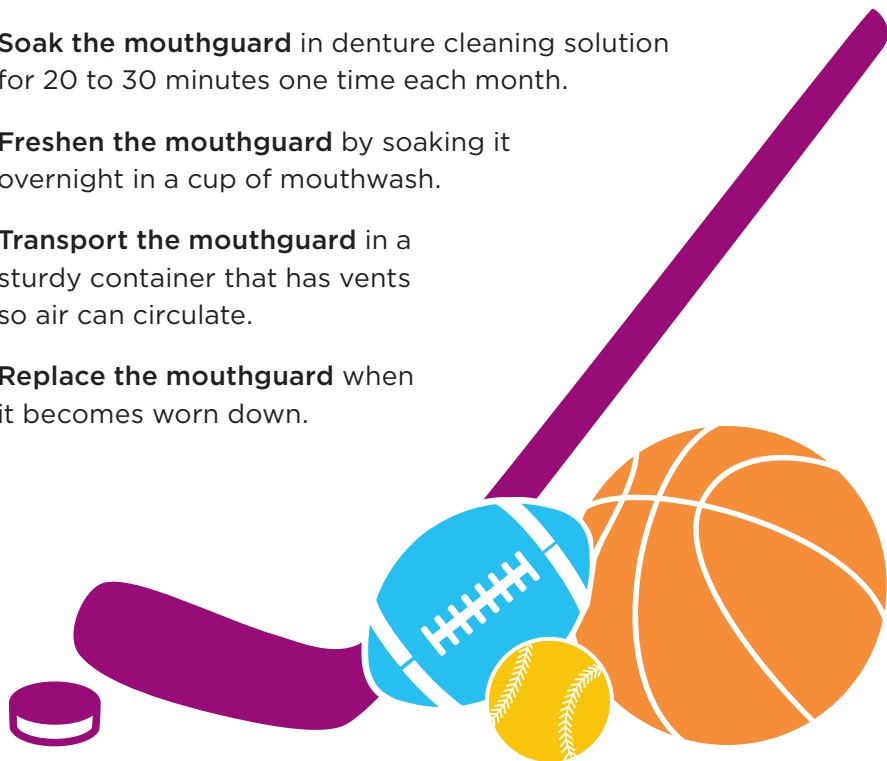


Playing sports is great for developing healthy bodies, but sometimes it's not so good for teeth. Mouthguards are a great way to protect teeth during sports.

Mouthguards come in three main types: stock, boil and bite, and custom-fit. You should talk to your dentist about which type is right for your child. You can find mouthguards at your local sporting goods store, but if you want a custom-fit mouthguard, it will have to be made by your child's dentist.

Be sure to teach your child how to take care of a mouthguard to make sure it is working right and isn't spreading germs:

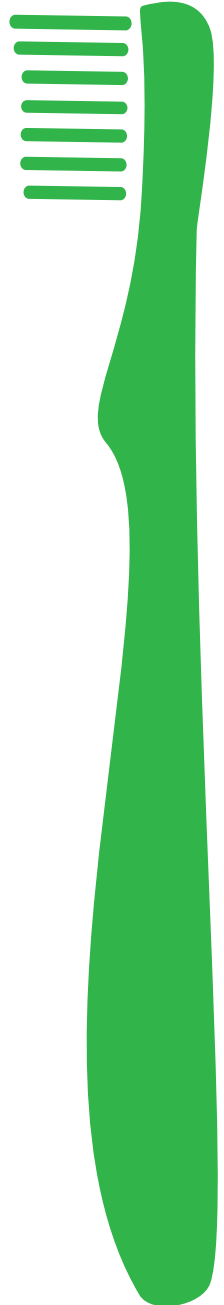
- **Brush the mouthguard** with a toothbrush and toothpaste after every use.
- **Soak the mouthguard** in denture cleaning solution for 20 to 30 minutes one time each month.
- **Freshen the mouthguard** by soaking it overnight in a cup of mouthwash.
- **Transport the mouthguard** in a sturdy container that has vents so air can circulate.
- **Replace the mouthguard** when it becomes worn down.





To stop the spread of germs:

- **Replace toothbrushes every three to four months.** Toothbrushes wear out and don't clean as well once the bristles get worn down. If a child gets sick, be sure to replace the toothbrush right away.
- **Sterilize toothbrushes once per week.** Microwaving a wet toothbrush for one minute or running it through the dishwasher will do the trick.
- **Store toothbrushes away from others.** Airborne bacteria can be shared between toothbrushes stored near each other in warm, moist environments like the bathroom.
- **Don't share toothpaste or bathroom drinking glasses.** All family members should have their own toothpaste and glass for rinsing after brushing.
- **Wash hands before and after brushing.** Make sure kids have clean hands before and after brushing to help lower the chance of germs entering the mouth.





Baby teeth usually begin to loosen and fall out starting at around age 6. In general, girls start to lose teeth earlier than boys, though the timing can vary for everyone. The last baby teeth usually fall out by age 12 or 13.

It is safe to pull out a loose tooth

Hold the tooth firmly with a piece of gauze or tissue, and give it a quick twist. If the tooth doesn't come out, wait a few days until it becomes looser on its own, and try again. It's OK to have your child wiggle a loose tooth gently to help it loosen, but if there is pain or if the tooth hasn't fallen out after many days, you may want to contact your dentist.



A little bleeding is OK

Give your child a glass of water to swish around and then spit out. This will help remove the blood. His or her mouth may bleed for a few minutes after the tooth falls out, but just give the mouth a little time to heal on its own and stop bleeding. Applying a clean piece of gauze to the area for a few minutes can help, especially if your child is upset by seeing blood.

A little soreness is common after losing a tooth

Try applying a washcloth-wrapped bag of ice to your child's face where the soreness is located. This can also help reduce any minor swelling that may occur.



For children, a visit from the Tooth Fairy may be the best part about losing a tooth!

Make the Tooth Fairy's visit extra special:

- **Have your child leave a note for the Tooth Fairy.**
- **Be sure your child is asleep** before the Tooth Fairy arrives!
- **Leave a handwritten note from the Tooth Fairy** complimenting the clean, healthy tooth or offering some tooth care tips along with a “treat” such as money or a small toy in exchange for the tooth.
- **Forget to grab the tooth?** Remind your child that the Tooth Fairy is very busy and may not have been able to get to every child's house in one night. Remember to grab it the next night!
- **What should the Tooth Fairy do with the tooth?** Some parents decide to throw out the tooth (don't let your child find it!), while some choose to save it. That's totally up to you, but make sure that the teeth remain hidden until your child no longer receives visits from the Tooth Fairy!





BRACE YOURSELF

As your child grows older, you may notice some large gaps between teeth that should be next to each other, crooked or overcrowded teeth, or chewing issues. If you have concerns, you should talk with your dentist, who may refer you to an orthodontist—a dentist who specializes in moving teeth and aligning jaws.

Orthodontic treatment could include:

- **Braces**—to straighten and realign teeth and fix over- or under-bites.
- **Spacers**—to make more room in between teeth that are overcrowded.
- **Retainers**—to prevent shifting of teeth or thumb sucking.



For additional information on orthodontics and to find an orthodontist, visit the website of the American Association of Orthodontists at: www.mylifemysmile.org.



RESOURCES
For Parents



It's important to find a dentist that makes the entire family feel comfortable. To find a dentist in a certain community or area, use Delta Dental's online dentist search tool at any of the following websites:

Michigan

Delta Dental of Michigan
www.deltadentalmi.com

Ohio

Delta Dental of Ohio
www.deltadentaloh.com

Indiana

Delta Dental of Indiana
www.deltadentalin.com

North Carolina

Delta Dental of North Carolina
www.deltadentalnc.com

If a family does not have dental benefits, they may still be able to receive dental treatment at little to no cost. Below are some options for finding dental care.

Michigan

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services*
Find free or low-cost care from a dentist.
<http://bit.ly/2bYnTW2>

Delta Dental of Michigan's online dentist search tool
www.deltadentalmi.com/findadentist

State of Michigan's Oral Health Directory*
www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/oral_health_directory_302799_7.pdf

If your children have Medicaid and are under the age of 21, they have Healthy Kids Dental (HKD). To find an HKD dentist or to learn more about this program, visit www.HealthyKidsDental.org or call 800-482-8915 toll-free (TTY users call 711).

To download a copy of the entire *From Drool to School* book, go to: www.deltadentalmi.com/drooltoschool



FINDING AND PAYING FOR DENTAL CARE

Ohio

Delta Dental of Ohio's online dentist search tool
www.deltadentaloh.com/findadentist

Ohio Department of Health*
www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/ohs/pap/find/find.aspx

Ohio Dental Association*
oda.org/about-the-oda/find-a-dentist

State of Ohio Medicaid coverage eligibility*
jfs.ohio.gov/ohp

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry*
www.aapd.org/finddentist

To download a copy of the entire *From Drool to School* book,
go to: www.dentaldentaloh.com/drooltoschool

Indiana

Delta Dental of Indiana's online dentist search tool
www.deltadentalin.com/findadentist

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
www.aapd.org/finddentist

Indiana University School of Dentistry
www.iusd.iupui.edu/index.php/patient-services/
www.iusd.iupui.edu/patient-services/free-or-low-cost-dental

State of Indiana Medicaid eligibility/application*
www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/2999.htm

Indiana Dental Association*
www.indental.org/find-a-dentist

To download a copy of the entire *From Drool to School* book,
go to: www.deltadentalin.com/drooltoschool



North Carolina

Delta Dental of North Carolina's online dentist search tool
www.deltadentalnc.com/findadentist

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services*
www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/oralhealth/services/safety-net.htm

North Carolina Dental Society*
www.ncdental.org/for-the-public/find-a-dentist

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
www.aapd.org/finddentist

To download a copy of the entire *From Drool to School* book,
go to: www.deltadentalnc.com/drooltoschool

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FROM DROOL TO SCHOOL VIDEO

Sometimes we take our teeth for granted. Why? Maybe it's because we get a practice set when we're young. Or maybe it's because we figure 32 permanent teeth are more than enough when we're older. Whatever the reason, it's important to remember that as children grow, dental needs change. And whether it's the first set or the second set, we want healthy teeth—and healthy bodies, too.

Visit Delta Dental's website to watch our cool *From Drool to School* video with your child!

Michigan

www.deltadentalmi.com/drooltoschool

Ohio

www.deltadentaloh.com/drooltoschool

Indiana

www.deltadentalin.com/drooltoschool

North Carolina

www.deltadentalnc.com/drooltoschool

