

Parents,

Brushing techniques are important especially in young children. As they get older children think they can do it themselves, but a child cannot brush correctly until age eight or nine. When using toothpaste the child should use a "pea size" amount. Smear the toothpaste into the bristles before the child begins to brush. Make sure to spit out the excess. Brushing should be done twice a day (morning and night) for two minutes. A timer is always a good idea to help the child. If the bristles are flared out, or if the child has been sick, it's time for a new toothbrush.

Any teeth that touch together should be flossed. The best time to floss is at night right before bedtime. Some parents find it difficult to floss a child's teeth, so here are some helpful tips: Have the child lay their head in your lap, tilt their head toward the ceiling, then "SEE-SAW, WRAP & SCRAPE." Gently see-saw between the child's teeth, pull floss toward the side of the tooth moving in an up-and-down motion to remove any plaque or food from the tooth. (Do this to both teeth that are touching)

In addition to brushing, there are other ways to help prevent cavities from forming. We should always try to give juice, milk, soda, etc. at meal times and drink water in between meals. When eating sweets, they are best eaten directly after meals as dessert. Constant snacking in between meals does not allow the body to neutralize the acids formed from the breakdown of sugars. These sugars are what cause cavities (sugar bugs) to develop on teeth. This also applies to drinking anything other than water between meals. When snacking, the best snack is CHEESE! It neutralizes the sugars on teeth. Peanuts and popcorn are also great snacks for older children. "Chocolate is better than chewy" just means that any candy with a chocolate base is better than chewy, sticky candy that never dissolves off the child's teeth. (M&M's are better than Skittle's)

Sometimes parents feel as though "baby teeth" are unimportant or less important. A child's primary teeth are very important to maintain and dental checkups at a young age may help prevent cavities, toothache or minimize the need for braces. If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment please call us at (205) 870-7110.

Thanks!

Dr. Michael Keller and Staff

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