



Children and Oral Health

Cavities are almost entirely preventable, yet they remain the single most common, chronic childhood disease — five times more common than asthma.¹ Luckily, there are a few easy ways you can help improve your child's oral health:

Brushing tips to improve your child's oral health

- Use a soft-bristled toothbrush to reach every surface of each tooth.
- Replace your child's toothbrush every three months, when bristles are frayed or after your child has been sick.
- To clean the outside surfaces of teeth, position the brush at a 45-degree angle where gums and teeth meet. Use short, gentle strokes in a circular motion.
- For inside surfaces of your child's upper and lower front teeth, hold the brush vertically. Use gentle back-and-forth strokes over teeth and gum tissue.
- For better flossing, insert floss between teeth using a back-and-forth motion. Curve floss into a C-shape against one tooth and then the other.

Children and sealants

While brushing and flossing regularly go a long way to improving oral health, sealants are another proven way to prevent cavities. A dental sealant is an invisible plastic coating applied by your dentist to your child's teeth. The American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

recommend sealants as powerful weapons against decay.^{2,3}

Sealants are usually applied to the chewing surface of back teeth, where most cavities develop.³ If bacteria can't penetrate a tooth's enamel, they can't multiply and cause decay.² Recent research shows that sealants not only protect healthy teeth, but also can actually stop decay in its beginning stages, preventing future cavities.²

Applying the sealant is a quick and simple process. There is very little discomfort, if any, and your child will be able to eat immediately afterward.²

Effective oral health habits and methods to prevent cavities, when started early, will stay with your children for years to come — and may help prevent costly, future oral health issues.

¹Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health, 2000.

²"Dental Sealants: Preventing and Halting Decay." Journal of the American Dental Association, March 2008, vol. 139, p. 380.

³"Sealants", American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry,