

HELPFUL HINTS FOR CHILDREN

Start good oral health habits with babies first tooth.

Age 6 mo.-1 yr:

Presentation and introduction of toothbrush and brushing. Take advantage of child's teething stage. Allow child to chew on tooth brush. Do not introduce toothpaste at this time.

Age 1-3 yrs:

A time to know and appreciate the importance of the function of primary teeth.

- The first teeth help to form the early shape of the mouth & jaw.
- Baby teeth maintain a space for permanent dentition. Early tooth loss could cause crooked teeth & poor alignment of permanent teeth.
- Teeth help the child to form words for speech.

Early tooth decay considerations.

- Bottle weaning-nursing bottle syndrome (early tooth decay).
- Dietary needs change.
- Introduction of solid table food.
- Maintain a low profile on use of sugars & salt to prevent an emotional or habit dependency.

Initial office visits started toward the end of this age group, depending on the maturity of the child.

- Brushing supervised by the parent, child encouraged to do as much as possible. Motor skills poorly developed at this time.
- Stress importance of diet in prevention of tooth decay.
- Encourage natural foods. Child's palate is sensitive to flavors.

Age 3-5 yrs: Pre-school

Regular office visits started as routine without emotional trauma.

- Review brushing, start plaque control
- Inform parents of flourides as used in this office.
- X-rays as necessary, with patient's cooperation.
- Discourage any oral habits "thumb sucking".

Age 6-8 yrs: School age

Patient taking a more active role in oral hygiene with some assistance or supervision of parent. Motor skills more fully developed.

- Disclose, do plaque count, review brushing.
- Self supervised prophylaxis and pumice as needed.
- Introduce flossing & fluoride.
- Sealants, as needed, and x-rays.
- Inform child of personal dietary choices; sugarless treats when possible, plaque forming foods, chain of decay.

Age 9-12 yrs:

Patient independently doing more oral hygiene without parental assistance, however, gentle reminders may be necessary. Self-consciousness about teeth and appearance developing.

- Self prophylaxis supervised. Do plaque count.
- Necessary x-rays. Fluorides continued.
- Sealants as needed.
- Review dietary choices as necessary.

Age 13-18 yrs: Thru high school

Patient independently doing all personal and oral hygiene without reminders or assistance.

- Adult prophylaxis started.
- Continue with plaque control or diet analysis as needed.
- Sealants as necessary.
- Continuation of fluoride treatments, necessary x-rays.

The above treatment schedule should prepare your child toward independence in personal care resulting in a lifetime of good dental health and low cost maintenance.