

Tip:

Good oral health should promote the “Big Five”: diet, fluoridation, visiting a dentist, sealants, and tooth brushing.

Diet

- **Reduce** the frequency of consuming **food and drinks containing sugar**.
- Snacking between meals should be free of sugars.
- Avoid frequent consumption of drinks containing acids (i.e. colas).

Fluoridation

- Remember that water fluoridation is a safe, equitable, and highly effective public health measure.
- Determine if your local water supply is fluoridated and, if not, support local efforts for optimal prevention.
- Use the schedule at right to prescribe **systemic** fluoride supplements for children under 16 living in areas without fluoride.
- For **topical** application of fluoride, review the Caries Risk Assessment Tool Policy available at www.aapd.org/media/policies.asp.

Age	<0.3 ppm	0.3–0.6 ppm	>0.6 ppm
Birth–6 months	none	none	none
6 months–3 years	0.25 mg daily	none	none
3 years–6 years	0.5 mg daily	0.25 mg daily	none
6 years–16 years	1.0 mg daily	0.5 mg daily	none
*Fluoride ion level in child's primary water source (ppm)			

Visiting a dentist

- Start dental visits after a child's first tooth erupts or by age one.
- Visit the dentist as often as recommended for regular checkups and professional cleanings.
- Schedule more frequent exams in those for whom oral disease may be a particular risk to health, such as patients with heart disease, pregnancy, and diabetes.
- Have an oral cancer exam every year even if you don't have teeth.

Sealants

- Sealants are plastic coatings that are placed on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth to prevent cavities.
- Sealants protect the chewing surfaces of the back teeth and do not replace fluoride; fluoride works best on the smooth surfaces of all the teeth.

Tooth Brushing

- Brush all tooth surfaces thoroughly using a soft-bristled nylon toothbrush and an age-appropriate amount of toothpaste (a thin film for toddlers and preschoolers, a pea-size dab for children, and a modest amount for adults).
- Remove plaque by brushing twice and **flossing your teeth at least once a day** to prevent periodontal disease.

References and Resources

- Academy of General Dentistry: www.agd.org
- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry: www.aapd.org
- American Dental Association: www.ada.org
- Bright Futures in Practice: Oral Health: www.brightfutures.org/publications/index.html
- Children's Dental Health Project: www.cdhp.org
- American Association of Public Health Dentistry: www.aaphd.org
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Oral Health Initiative: www.hrsa.gov/oralhealth
- National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center: www.mchoralhealth.org
- *Oral Health Series Tool Box*. Western Journal of Medicine. Volume 174. March–May, 2001. www.ewjm.com
- U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Children's Oral Health. www.nidcr.nih.gov/sgr/sgr.htm



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