



## All Aboard the Healthy Smile Train!!!

Parent Training: Dental Health and Nutrition

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December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

We always enjoy seeing the children's beautiful smiles!!

Taking good care of their teeth goes a long way to keeping those smiles bright!!



# What will we **learn in this topic?**



**01**

Brushing basics



**02**

Healthy foods



**03**

Dental checkups







**04**

Fun with flossing



**01**

**Brushing basics**

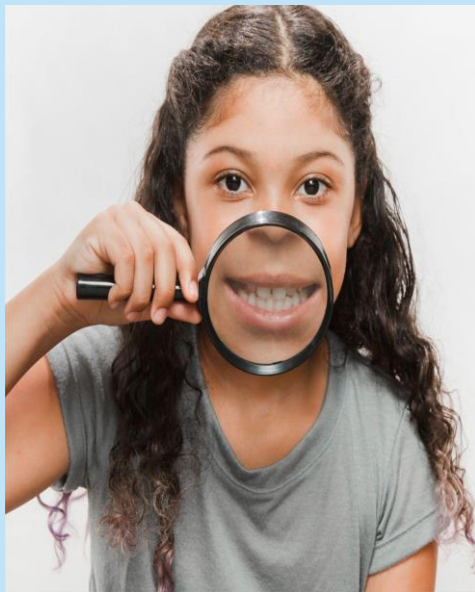
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- Start brushing as soon as the first tooth erupts.
  - Brush teeth twice a day for at least 2 minutes.
  - Set a 2-minute timer or play a favorite song while brushing. Some electric toothbrushes have timers that let you know when 2 minutes are up.
- Divide the mouth into quarters and spend at least 30 seconds on each quadrant.
  - Make sure they use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
  - Use short, gentle strokes and don't brush too hard- may cause the gums to bleed.
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**Brush for at  
least 2 minutes!**



# Brushing basics



- Brush all surfaces of teeth, including outside, inside, and chewing surfaces.
- Gently brush the tongue- this also helps with bad breath by removing the bacteria that causes the bad odor.
- Help or fully brush your child's teeth until they develop good brushing skills and manual dexterity to do it themselves.
- Teach short strokes that reach a tooth's entire surface.
- Start at the gum line and brush down to the chewing surface of the tooth.
- Don't forget to spit out the toothpaste when you are done rather than swallowing it.
- This leads us to Part 2- **Healthy foods.**

# Fueling With Teeth-Friendly Foods

- Good nutrition forms the building blocks of children's dental health.
- A well-balanced diet rich in vitamins, minerals, and essential nutrients helps strengthen teeth, gums, and bones.
- Foods such as **fresh produce, dairy products, lean proteins, and whole grains** provide the necessary nutrients for healthy tooth development and maintenance.
- Encouraging children to consume teeth-friendly foods can contribute to their overall oral health.
- We can educate parents on choosing the right foods for their children's oral health, suggesting alternatives to sugary snacks and beverages that can lead to tooth decay.
- Incorporating fiber-rich fruits and vegetables, like apples, carrots, and celery, helps stimulate saliva production, which aids in neutralizing harmful acids and preventing tooth decay.
- Additionally, calcium-rich dairy products, such as milk, cheese, and yogurt, promote strong teeth and bones.



# Healthy Foods

## Snack Ideas for Families: Foods to Keep on Hand

Type	Suggestions
Fresh Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apples, bananas, peaches, nectarines, pears</li><li>• Cherries, grapes, plums (sliced or pitted)</li><li>• Orange or grapefruit sections</li><li>• Strawberries, grapes (cut into half for small children)</li></ul>
Dried Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apples, apricots, peaches, pears (cut up)</li><li>• Dates, prunes</li><li>• Raisins, cranberries</li></ul>
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carrot sticks, celery sticks</li><li>• Raw or steamed cauliflower, broccoli</li><li>• Bell pepper strips—red, yellow, orange, and green</li><li>• Grape and cherry tomatoes</li><li>• Fresh or frozen corn and peas</li><li>• Sliced cucumbers</li><li>• Avocado slices or chunks</li></ul>
Lean Proteins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fish (canned tuna, salmon, sardines, whitefish)</li><li>• Peanut butter or other nut butters (smooth, spread on whole grain bread or crackers)</li><li>• Edamame beans or chickpeas or hummus spreads</li><li>• Cooked tofu cubes or tofu dip</li><li>• Hard boiled eggs</li></ul>
Dairy Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cheese (sliced, grated, or diced)</li><li>• Cottage cheese</li><li>• Low-sugar yogurt</li><li>• Milk—cow's milk or non-dairy milks</li></ul>
Breads & Cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whole wheat bread</li><li>• Whole grain tortillas or tortilla chips</li><li>• Whole grain crackers</li><li>• Whole grain dry cereals</li><li>• Rice cakes</li><li>• Whole grain pitas and bagels</li><li>• Air-popped popcorn</li></ul>

# Dental Checkups



Why are regular dental visits important for your child?

- **1. Detecting and Preventing Dental Issues**

Regular dental checkups allow dentists to detect any dental issues early on before they worsen and become more difficult and costly to treat.

- Therefore, it is crucial for kids to receive regular checkups so that any issues can be identified in their early stages.
- Having regular cleanings can also help prevent dental issues such as cavities and tooth decay.

- **2. Establishing Good Oral Hygiene Habits**

Regular dental checkups for kids can help establish good oral hygiene habits from a young age.

- The dentist will teach your child the best practices for brushing and flossing to ensure that they are maintaining proper oral hygiene at home.
- Good oral hygiene practices set the foundation for a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums.

- **3. Identifying Problem Behaviors**

Sometimes kids have habits that can harm their dental health, such as thumb-sucking, bottle-feeding for too long, or using pacifiers past a certain age.

- A dentist during a regular checkup can identify such behaviors and provide advice on how to curb them before they damage the child's dental health further.

- **4. Education**

Dentists can offer suggestions and education on how to keep your child's teeth and gums healthier.

- This includes dietary suggestions to avoid sugary drinks and snacks, and the best toothpaste and toothbrushes to use.

- **5. Establishing a Positive Relationship with the Dentist**

Regular dental checkups can help your child build a positive relationship with the dentist.

- The dentist and other members of the staff create a friendly, comfortable, and welcoming environment that leads to more successful checkups, and in the long-term less anxiety and fear associated with dental procedures.

# How often should a child go to the dentist?

- Generally, children should see a dentist by the time they're one year old or when their first tooth comes through.
- After that, your dentist will let you know how often to bring your child for a check-up, usually every 6-12 months.



# Flossing-

## 1) Why is it important, 2) How to make flossing a habit and 3) Making flossing fun

### Why is flossing important?

- We should stress the importance of flossing to remove food from between the teeth.
- Also to remove plaque, which is a colorless sticky film that collects around and between your teeth and below the gum line, to prevent the buildup of tartar, which increase the risk of developing gum disease.
- Unfortunately, plaque forms when bacteria mixes with sugary and starchy foods. This is why we try to limit how much sugary foods our children eat.
- The more plaque you have on the enamel of your teeth, the higher your risk of developing a cavity. Flossing helps prevent this buildup of plaque.
- Good dental hygiene doesn't only benefit your teeth and gums. It may benefit your heart health, too.



# How to Make Flossing a Habit

- Get help from someone a even better, make your child your “flossing buddy” and floss together. You can brush and floss together. Kids are great at giving adults a hard time for their bad habits, plus you can make sure they’re flossing and brushing correctly.
- Set a reminder on your phone to do it the same time every day, making it a routine.
- It’s common sense to floss at the same time you brush, which should already be a habit. The key is to floss before you brush. By removing the gunk on the sides of your teeth, the surface will be exposed to the fluoride in your toothpaste, helping to strengthen the enamel of your teeth.
- This is a big one!!! Reward your child when they follow your instructions to brush and floss. There may be ups and downs, but don’t get discouraged!!
- Find floss that works for you, like traditional floss or floss sticks.
- It is suggested to floss once a day while brushing twice a day. Some floss in the morning, some at night. You find what works for you and your child.

# How to Make Flossing Fun

A visual flossing schedule can help make oral hygiene fun in the following ways:

- Track individual flossing progress using bright markers or fun stickers
- Like we mentioned, provide rewards when flossing goals are achieved
- Create a fun flossing tradition that kids and other members of your family will remember
- An easy way to improve the flossing experience is allowing kids to pick child-friendly floss supplies. Floss sticks are available in several bright colors, shapes, and flavors. Kids can even choose floss sticks featuring their favorite cartoon or superhero characters.
- Make it a game: Competition is a great way to breed success. Encourage your family members to compete against each other or time to make this activity into a lively game. Create a scoring system and assign points to determine the winner. You can also introduce a fun song or story to accompany every flossing session.

### **Fun activities to encourage brushing:**

- Conduct a science experiment simulating tooth enamel using hard boiled eggs. [Check out this example from Pre-K Pages](#) that is easy to adapt for older children too.
- Make your own toothpaste:
  - 4 tsp. Baking soda
  - 1 tsp. Salt
  - 1 tsp. Flavoring (such as peppermint extract)Mix and store in an airtight container.  
Extra fun: name your toothpaste and create a label for the container.
- Create oral health posters to hang around school. Have students vote on the best poster and award a prize.

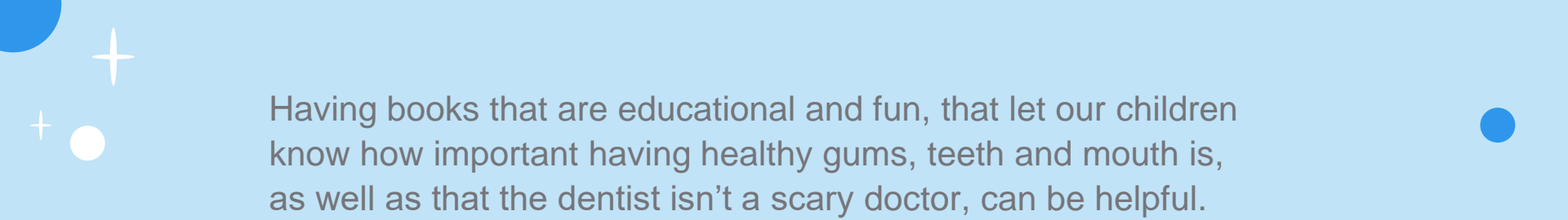
### **Teach kids about the importance of flossing:**

- Young children can practice their technique using Lego/Duplo blocks, egg cartons or ice cube trays. Stick Play-Doh between and around the base of “teeth” and give the children floss to remove it. Stress the importance of flossing not only to remove food from between the teeth but also to remove plaque below the gum line to prevent the buildup of tartar.  
[Click here](#) for more information about proper flossing technique.





friends  
and  
the  
good  
things



Having books that are educational and fun, that let our children know how important having healthy gums, teeth and mouth is, as well as that the dentist isn't a scary doctor, can be helpful.

Here are some examples:

[The Tooth Book](#) by Dr. Seuss

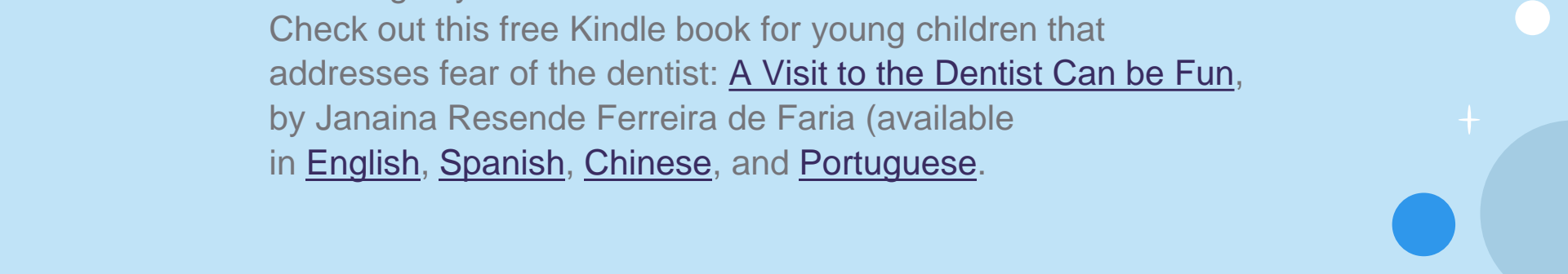
[My First Visit to the Dentist](#) by Eve Marleau

[The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist](#) by Stan and Jan Berenstain

[Brush, Brush, Brush!](#) by Alicia Padron

[Sugarbug Doug: All About Cavities, Plaque, and Teeth](#) by Dr. Ben Magleby

Check out this free Kindle book for young children that addresses fear of the dentist: [A Visit to the Dentist Can be Fun](#), by Janaina Resende Ferreira de Faria (available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#), and [Portuguese](#).



**Thanks! I hope you  
enjoyed this presentation!!**

**Do you have any questions?**

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