

# HEALTHY HABITS

## TO KEEP YOUR KIDS SMILING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS AND INTO THE NEW YEAR

The holiday season is always a busy time—especially for families. With kids out of school, a steady stream of festivities and a new year to plan for, the rhythm of everyday life gets put on hold. And sometimes that means good oral health routines and habits go out the window too.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) wants to remind parents and caregivers that the holiday break is a great time to help your kids establish and maintain healthy dental habits. This includes good brushing, flossing and eating habits that are essential for healthy teeth.



TOOTH DECAY IS LARGELY

### PREVENTABLE.

ESSENTIAL STEPS TO PREVENTION:



The AAPD recommends that a child's first visit to a pediatric dentist should be by the AGE OF ONE or when the FIRST TOOTH APPEARS. Regular check-ups should occur every SIX MONTHS.



Parents should help their children brush their teeth TWICE DAILY — after breakfast and before bedtime are ideal. It's recommended that parents/caregivers supervise the brushing for school-age children until they are 7 to 8 years of age.



The BEST TOOTHBRUSHES for children have soft, round-ended (polished) bristles that clean while being gentle on the gums. The handle should be proportionate to the size of the child's hand.



Parents can begin FLOSSING for their children when two teeth are touching. Children can begin flossing on their own around age 7.



Look for FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE with the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance.



### DIET IS THE FOUNDATION

FOR A CHILD'S OVERALL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AND IS ALSO VITAL TO THEIR ORAL HEALTH. FACTS & TIPS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS TO KEEP IN MIND:



Sugary candy, food and drinks are part of the holidays. With this, the risk of cavities and poor dental health also increases. Parents should try to moderate sugar intake, and WATCH OUT FOR CARBONATED DRINKS, which actually erode teeth more than sweetened drinks.



Keep an eye on snacking — ideally children should have NO MORE THAN THREE SNACK TIMES a day.



COOKED STARCHES CAN LEAD TO CAVITIES just as sugars can. In fact, cooked starches such as breads, crackers, pasta, pretzels and potato chips frequently take longer to clear the mouth than sugars.



LIMIT SUGAR INTAKE by checking labels and buying sugar-free varieties of food options, if available.



CHEESES such as aged cheddar, Swiss, mozzarella and Monterey jack are great as a snack or to eat after a meal because they clear the mouth of food and neutralize the acids that attack teeth.