



WISCONSIN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrate National Children’s Dental Health Month with These Five Healthy Tips

WEST ALLIS, WIS., Feb. 19, 2019 – February is National Children’s Dental Health Month and is dedicated to emphasizing the value of establishing good oral health habits in children at an early age.

“Oral health is tightly connected to overall health, and it’s critical that kids start early to establish a strong base for a lifetime of healthy, happy smiles,” said Dr. Andrea Igowsky, a pediatric dentist in Sheboygan and member of the Wisconsin Dental Association. “From learning the best way to brush and floss to choosing healthy snacks to making regular dental visits a priority, there are simple steps parents and caregivers can take to help set children up for success.”

The WDA offers the following tips to encourage healthy dental habits in children:

Avoid sugar. Cavities can be prevented by cutting down on the sweets. By limiting the amount of sugar consumed, the less opportunity there is for dental plaque to form. If plaque is not removed by either brushing, flossing or naturally by saliva, the mouth becomes more acidic, which can lead to decay. Some healthy alternatives to sugary snacks include water, cheese, crackers and apples.

Brush and floss together. Make brushing fun by doing it together! Show kids the right way to hold the toothbrush and how to move it gently along their teeth and gums. Maintaining regular brushing and flossing routines as a family allows caregivers to set good examples and monitor kids to be sure they’re brushing the right way, and for the proper amount of time.

Don’t overdo it on the toothpaste! A recent [report](#) released by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) revealed that 40 percent of children ages 3-6 use excessive amounts of toothpaste when brushing their teeth. The recommended amount of toothpaste for children of these ages is a pea-sized amount, and even less for those under the age of 3. Anything more than that can lead to fluorosis, causing white lines or streaks in the teeth.

Make routine dental appointments. Children should start going to the dentist for routine cleanings and check-ups by the time of their first birthday or when the first tooth appears. Appointments are recommended every six months, unless the dentist suggests otherwise. By bringing children to the dentist's office early and often, they can develop comfort with their dentist and build a foundation for healthy smiles at a young age.

Check for fluoride. Fluoride is one of the best and safest ways we can all prevent cavities. It plays an essential role in protecting our teeth by making them stronger and more resistant to acid. Make sure that children are receiving a sufficient amount of fluoride by checking the levels in your drinking water and toothpastes. If there is any doubt, ask the child's dentist about prescribing additional supplements at the next appointment.

The American Dental Association held the first national observance of Children's Dental Health Day in February 1949, and later lengthened the one-day event to a month-long celebration to stress its importance.

Each year, dentists throughout Wisconsin and the United States commemorate the month with observances that often include posters, coloring and essay contests, health fairs, free dental screenings, museum exhibits, classroom presentations and dental office tours. This year's campaign slogan is "Brush and clean in between to build a healthy smile," highlighting helpful guidelines for proper oral health routines.

For more information on National Children's Dental Health Month and good oral health habits for kids, please visit WDA.org.

The Wisconsin Dental Association has 3,100 member dentists and a number of dental hygienists. With just 3,500 licensed dentists in the state, the WDA is considered the leading voice for dentistry in Wisconsin. WDA members are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care. Established in 1870, the WDA is headquartered in West Allis and has a legislative office in Madison. The WDA is affiliated with the American Dental Association - the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. For more information, call 414-276-4520, visit WDA.org and find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), [Flickr](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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