

A GUIDE FOR AT-HOME DENTAL CARE FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD



Practicing the recommendations in this guide can significantly reduce the risk of developing oral disease. Topics include dental health care/hygiene, nutrition, fluoride, dental visits, and dental emergencies.

BRUSH 2 TIMES A DAY, FLOSS 1 TIME A DAY

- Brush once in the morning, after breakfast. Brush once at night, before bed. Many children need help brushing and flossing their teeth until they are 8-9 years old.
- Use fluoride toothpaste to prevent cavities, slow growth of tooth decay, and even reverse early stages of tooth decay. Your fluoride toothpaste should have this logo on it.
- Children learn best through example; allow your child to watch you brush your teeth, making good oral hygiene a fun activity to do together!



PRO TIP #1:

Replace toothbrushes every 3 months (or sooner if frayed) or after having a cold or flu, to avoid getting sick again.



PRO TIP #2:

The right toothbrush for your child should have:

- Soft bristles and a rounded head.
- A toothbrush head size that fits comfortably in your child's mouth. You want to fit into all those hard-to-reach places!
- Handles should be easy for your child to hold and maneuver.
- If you're not sure if a toothbrush is a good fit for your child, follow the age ranges on the package.

VISIT THE DENTIST TWICE A YEAR (EVERY SIX MONTHS)

If your family needs a dentist, please call Community Health Care at **(253) 722-2151** to schedule an appointment. If you have not been seen at a Community Health Care Dental Clinic before, the first appointment will be for an exam. We accept most insurances, including Apple Health (Medicaid), and offer a sliding-fee scale if you are uninsured.

More information on visiting the dentist is listed on the back side of this guide.



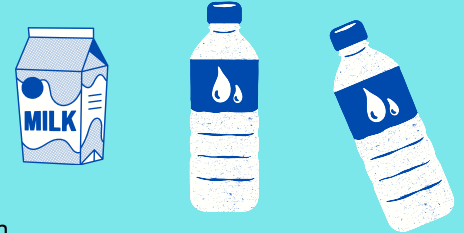
FOODS FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

If children have poor diets, their teeth may not develop properly. Healthy diets help build strong teeth and resist tooth decay and gum disease. A healthy diet includes eating a variety of:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Grains
- Chicken, turkey, fish, lean beef and pork
- Fat-free or low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt

Also, consider

- Limiting saturated and trans fats, added sugars, and sodium.
- Limiting sugary drinks – water or a glass of milk is healthier for your teeth.
- Reducing sugar intake to lower the risk of cavities and weight gain. Children ages 2-18 should have no more than **25** grams of sugar per day. (For reference, **25** grams is about six teaspoons of sugar or eight ounces of soda that has sugar.)



PRO TIP #3:

For more information on dietary guidelines, healthy eating on a budget, recipes, and more, visit the website www.myplate.gov



COMMUNITY
HEALTH
Care

MEDICAL • DENTAL • PHARMACY

Community Health Care provides the highest quality health care with compassionate and accessible service for all. No one is turned away due to inability to pay.

VISITING THE DENTIST



Visit the dentist regularly to help keep your teeth and gums healthy. To schedule an appointment at Community Health Care, call (253) 722-2151 or visit www.commhealth.org for more information.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE'S DENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- First dental check-up by 1st tooth or 1st birthday (whichever comes first!)
- First set of x-rays taken by 5 years old.
- Visit the dentist every 6 months to keep up with your dental health and find any cavities as early as possible.
- Limit the amount of soda and junk food eaten. Soda is the # 1 cause of tooth decay and cavities.

WHAT IS A CAVITY?



When bacteria, already in your mouth, mix with the sugar in your food, it produces an acid that can dissolve tooth enamel (the hard white part of your tooth). As this happens more and more, cavities are made, leaving a hole in the tooth. If a cavity is not treated, it will become bigger and could get down to the nerve, causing a bad toothache. Untreated cavities cause permanent damage to mouths and overall health. Your child may experience pain, being absent from school, having trouble concentrating, and lowered self-esteem and social development – all can lower quality of life and ability to succeed.

PREVENTATIVE PRACTICE: FLUORIDE

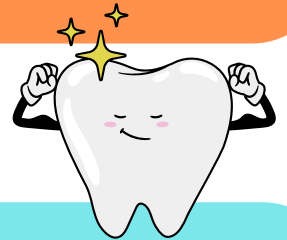
Fluoride varnish is a treatment painted onto teeth by a Dentist, Dental Hygienist, or Dental Assistant to help prevent cavities. Fluoride improves dental and overall health. Fluoride varnish, fluoride toothpaste, and fluoride in community water are all safe to be used. Talk with a dentist if you have questions or concerns about the many ways you can get fluoride.

DID YOU KNOW?

There is **NO** proven scientific evidence that shows fluoride causes or increases the risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease, allergies, cancer, Down Syndrome, heart disease, immune disorders, low intelligence, renal disorders, or osteoporosis/bone fracture(s).

PRO TIP #4:

Before using other oral health remedies, supplements, and products, talk with a dentist to find out if they are helpful and safe.



PREVENTATIVE PRACTICE: DENTAL SEALANTS

Sealants are placed on back teeth (molars) before they have any decay or cavities. They are made from a plastic material and are placed in the deep grooves of the chewing surface of molars, which are much deeper while teeth are growing in. Even with careful brushing and flossing, the deep pits and valleys on back teeth collect food and bacteria. Sealants fill in the grooves so that a toothbrush has a better chance of removing food and bacteria, reducing the risk of cavities.

WHAT TO DO IN A DENTAL EMERGENCY

TOOTHACHE



- Call your dentist and visit the office as soon as possible.
- Rinse the mouth with water and apply a cold compress or ice wrapped in a cloth to the sore area.
- Do not take aspirin or put heat on the affected area.

PERMANENT TOOTH KNOCKED OUT

- Find the tooth. Rinse it gently in cool water.
- Replace the tooth in the socket and hold it there with clean gauze or a washcloth.
- If you cannot put the tooth back in the socket, place the tooth in a clean container, preferably with cold milk.
- Go to your dentist, with the tooth, as soon as possible.

CHIPPED OR BROKEN TOOTH

- Contact your dentist immediately. Fast action can save the tooth, prevent infection, and reduce the need for extensive dental treatment.
- Rinse the mouth with water and apply cold compresses to reduce swelling.
- If you can find the broken tooth fragment, it is important to take it to the dentist.