



# Generations Dental Center

**Pediatric and Adult Dentistry**

Gentle, quality care for the entire family

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## TOP 10 DENTAL HEALTH TIPS

1. **Brush teeth at least twice per day as soon as they appear in the mouth.** A pea-sized amount of fluoridated paste should be used for a child that can spit, only a smear layer (barely visible) should be used for a child who cannot. Brushing helps to remove food particles and plaque bacteria which form acids on the teeth. Brush right after meals and snacks too, if possible.
2. **Begin flossing when any two teeth touch.** Food gets stuck between the teeth when you eat and if it is not removed with floss, the bacteria metabolize it to acid which demineralizes the tooth enamel resulting in cavities between teeth.
3. **Drink fluoridated water.** This is important for strengthening the developing permanent teeth up until 16 years of age. If you do not live in a community that has fluoridated water, you can purchase bottled water that is fluoridated at the grocery store or ask your dentist or pediatrician for fluoride supplements.
4. **Give water or milk instead of juice.** Juice contains sugar, even the ones that say 100% natural, no sugar added. Limit juice intake to no more than one cup per day and give it with a meal. Never allow your child to sip juice or any sugar-containing beverage throughout the day, rather, it should be consumed in one sitting. A child should not take milk to bed since milk contains a sugar called lactose which can also be metabolized by bacteria. A child should not drink soda or seltzer. These are carbonated (contain carbonic acid) and this acid demineralizes the tooth enamel. Gatorade is also acidic and it has a high sugar content and thus should be avoided.
5. **Avoid sticky, chewy, gooey foods. This includes GUMMY VITAMINS, fruit snacks and dried fruit!** These foods get stuck in the grooves of the teeth and are very difficult to brush away completely.
6. **Give as few snacks as possible.** Each time your child eats a sugary or starchy food, bacteria metabolize it and secrete acid. This acid eats away at tooth enamel for about 30 minutes. The more times a child snacks, the more often the acid is allowed to work on the teeth. If you are going to give a sugary treat, try and serve it with a meal. During a meal, the amount of saliva in the mouth increases, making it easier to wash food away from teeth. Suggestions for tooth friendly snacks: fresh fruits and vegetables, cheese, yogurt, eggs, sandwiches and a banana milkshake.
7. **Your child should visit a dentist no later than their first birthday and every six months afterwards.** It is important to detect decay at an early stage when it can be treated. Dental decay left untreated can cause unnecessary pain and lead to an abscess or a cellulitis which can result in the loss of teeth and even life!! A dental exam may also uncover other issues with tooth development.
8. **Your child should wear a mouthguard if ANY contact sport is played regardless of whether the sport mandates their use or not.** This is most important for children that have permanent top front teeth since these are the teeth that are typically injured during sporting accidents.
9. **Try to minimize saliva sharing activities.** For example, do not share utensils or drink from the same cup. Saliva contains bacteria. Cavities are an infectious disease caused by bacteria that can be transmitted from one person to another through saliva.
10. **It is important that you as a parent maintain optimal oral health.** You are a role model for your child!