



Brush up on a Healthy Habit

TOOTH DECAY is the most prevalent chronic childhood disease in America, and it's preventable! Every February Children's Dental Health Month promotes the benefits of good oral health for children and their caregivers. This year the slogan is "Brush and clean in between to build a healthy smile."

Alarming, almost half of all children have cavities by the time they enter kindergarten and those with poor oral health are 3 times more likely to miss school. Cavities and more severe oral health concerns add up to a lot of time and stress for both children and caregivers, not to mention the expense. It is estimated that every dollar spent on preventive care equates to \$8 to \$50 saved in emergency or restorative care. **Help children have healthy teeth by remembering the 2-2-2 rule:**

- Visit a dentist 2 times per year
- Brush and floss 2 times a day
- Always brush for 2 whole minutes!

TOOTH DECAY IS INFECTIOUS

Research shows *Streptococcus mutans*, the bacteria that causes tooth decay, can be passed along from person to person. So think twice before you clean off a dropped pacifier with your own mouth or share utensils, drinks



or toothbrushes with your child. Instead, use soap and water to clean off pacifiers or carry a backup in case of an accidental drop. Be sure everyone in the household uses their own cup, fork, toothbrush, etc.

BABY TEETH MATTER

The idea that baby teeth will just fall out so they aren't important is false. Baby teeth have an incredibly important job of helping children chew and speak and also make up their beautiful smiles. Additionally they hold space for the permanent teeth that are growing under the gums. When a tooth is lost too early or is removed due to severe

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DID YOU KNOW...

- February is National Children's Dental Health Month.
- More than half of children will be affected by tooth decay before age five.
- More than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related conditions.
- Contrary to popular belief, George Washington's dentures were made from human teeth, gold, hippopotamus tusk and ivory—not wood.
- February is American Heart Month.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the US causing 1 in 4 deaths annually.
- February is Cancer Prevention Month.
- Adding cruciferous vegetables, like Brussels sprouts, broccoli and cabbage to your diet can help lower risk for cancers of the colon, mouth, esophagus and stomach.

dentalassociates.com, mycarolinadentist.com, American Heart Association, American Institute for Cancer Research

Quotable Quotes

"One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating."

— Luciano Pavarotti

INSIDE:

- Why Most Sore Throats, Coughs & Runny Noses Don't Need Antibiotics
- Have a Heart Healthy Valentine's Day
- Recipes

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decay, permanent teeth have a difficult time finding room when they are ready to emerge, often causing crowding or crooked teeth that can be expensive to fix and can contribute to low self-esteem.

It's important to care for baby teeth from the start. Begin by cleaning the inside of a baby's mouth with a wet gauze or washcloth from birth. As soon as teeth appear, decay can occur. For children under 3 years, start brushing with a child-size toothbrush and a "smear" of fluoride toothpaste the size of a grain of rice. For children 3-6 years old, use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste and brush twice daily. Supervise brushing to ensure good habits and remind children not to swallow.

FORGET RINSING

"Spit, don't rinse" is the recommended best practice for good oral health. Rinsing after we brush washes away all the fluoride that was just applied to the teeth. It is better to spit and not rinse after brushing to ensure fluoride will remain on the teeth and improve its effectiveness.

SEE A DENTIST SOONER AND REGULARLY

As soon as a child has teeth, they can get cavities. Your child's year of firsts now includes a trip to the dentist. Plan to see a dentist after the first tooth comes through, no later than their first birthday. Then keep up the good habits by scheduling regular visits every 6 months thereafter.

DON'T FORGET THE FLOSS

If two teeth touch it's time to start flossing. Plaque can build up between teeth and along the gum line where a toothbrush can't reach. You can floss for your child by using traditional floss or the plastic flossers until they have the dexterity to do it themselves. It does not matter whether it is done before or after brushing as long as it is done!

BRUSHING AT THE TABLE IS A HEALTHY PRACTICE

Many Head Start and other child care settings have incorporated daily brushing into their routine. It can happen seated at a table or on the floor, and because of the new recommendation of not rinsing, it isn't necessary to have access to a sink. Brushing in a group along with an adult role model provides a great opportunity for preschool children to learn how to brush properly. Simply provide each child with their own toothbrush (labeled with their name) and a small cup with a dab of toothpaste on the rim. Show them how to scoop the toothpaste from the rim onto their toothbrush, brush all of their teeth for two minutes and use the cup to spit when finished.

Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Be a positive role model and teach children good habits from the beginning to help them grow up with a healthy mouth and beautiful smile!

— Rachel O'Neal
Child Health and Nutrition Specialist

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Why Most Sore Throats, Coughs and Runny Noses Don't Need Antibiotics

If your child has a sore throat, cough or runny nose, you might expect the doctor to prescribe antibiotics. However, most of the time, children don't need antibiotics to treat a respiratory illness. **In fact, antibiotics can do more harm than good. Here's why:**

ANTIBIOTICS FIGHT BACTERIA, NOT VIRUSES

If your child has a bacterial infection, antibiotics may help. However, if your child has a virus, antibiotics will not help your child feel better or keep others from getting sick.

- The common cold and flu are both viruses.
- Chest colds, such as bronchitis, are also usually caused by viruses. Bronchitis is a cough with a lot of thick, sticky phlegm or mucus. Cigarette smoke and particles in the air can also cause bronchitis but bacteria are not usually the cause.
- Most sinus infections are also caused by viruses. The symptoms are a lot of mucus in the nose and post-nasal drip. Mucus that is colored does not necessarily mean your child has a bacterial infection.

ANTIBIOTICS DO NOT HELP TREAT VIRUSES AND SOME INFECTIONS

Some cases of the flu are both viral and bacterial. For these cases, antibiotics may not be needed. Sometimes bacteria can cause sinus infections, but even then the infection usually clears up on its own in a week or so. Many common ear infections also clear up on their own without antibiotics.

Some sore throats, like strep throat are bacterial infections. For these cases, antibiotics may be needed. Symptoms include fever, redness and trouble swallowing. However, most children who have these symptoms do not have strep throat. Your child should have a strep test to confirm that it is strep, and then, if they're needed, the doctor will prescribe antibiotics.



ANTIBIOTICS HAVE RISKS

Side effects from antibiotics are a common reason children go to the emergency room. These medicines can cause diarrhea or vomiting and about 5 in 100 children have allergies to them. Some allergic reactions can be serious and life threatening. The misuse and overuse of antibiotics encourages bacteria to change, so that medicines don't

work as well to get rid of them. This is called "antibiotic resistance." When bacteria are resistant to the medicines used to treat them, it's easier for infections to spread from person to person. Antibiotic-resistant infections are also more expensive to treat and harder to cure.

WHEN DOES YOUR CHILD NEED ANTIBIOTICS?

Your child may need antibiotics if:

- A cough does not get better in 14 days.
- A bacterial form of pneumonia or whooping cough (pertussis) is diagnosed.
- Symptoms of a sinus infection do not get better in 10 days or they get better and then worse again.
- Your child has a yellow-green discharge and a fever of at least 102° F for several days in a row.
- Your child has strep throat, based on a rapid strep test or throat culture. If strep is not diagnosed with a test, antibiotics should not be given. No test is needed if your child has a runny nose and cough as well as a sore throat. Those are symptoms of a different virus.
- For infant younger than 3 months of age, call your pediatrician for any fever above 100.4° F. Very young infants can have serious infections that might need antibiotics.

— *Article by Consumer Reports developed in cooperation with the American Academy of Pediatrics.*

Brussels Sprouts Slaw

Brussels sprouts	1 pound
Fuji or Gala apple, peeled, cored and finely chopped	1
Cranberries, dried	1/2 cup
Walnuts, chopped (optional)	1/2 cup
Salt	1/2 tsp
Pepper	1/8 tsp
Meyer lemon juice, fresh (see Note)	1/3 cup
Olive oil	2 Tbsp

1. Rinse and trim the bottom from sprouts and remove any loose or bruised leaves. Place shredding disk or fine slicing disk in food processor and using feeder tube, gradually shred Brussels sprouts or chop finely.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine shredded Brussels sprouts, apple, cranberries, walnuts, salt, pepper and lemon juice. Add oil and stir well.
3. Cover and refrigerate 3 hours to overnight. Re-stir before serving.

Note: If Meyer lemon juice is not available, use 1/4 cup regular lemon juice.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for vegetable

— AICR Health-e-Recipes

Simple Chicken Pasta Casserole

Chicken, cooked	3 cups
Marinara sauce	1 (24 ounce) jar
Pasta, whole wheat, cooked	4 cups
Mozzarella cheese, shredded	1 cup

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a baking dish with non-stick spray.
2. Combine chicken, pasta and marinara sauce. Pour into prepared pan.
3. Top with mozzarella. Bake uncovered 15–20 minutes or until bubbly.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for whole grain-rich and meat/meat alternate

— GimmeDelicious.com

ACTIVITY CORNER



Have A Heart Healthy Valentine's Day

Not all hearts come in chocolate – Create a magnificent masterpiece for your party table with colorful berries arranged on a tray in a heart shape or shape pizza dough into a heart and top with cheese and fresh, chopped vegetables.

Think beyond Hershey's kisses – Instead of traditional candy attached to Valentine cards, make it a special sticker, pencil or a fun eraser this year.

Give the most important muscle a workout – Make it a dance party, a jumping party or balance-a-balloon-on-your head party. The possibilities are endless!

Give children the gift of knowledge – Teach them about their heart, how to find their heart beat and what they should do to keep their hearts healthy.

Have a heart – Run a food or clothes drive and donate the items to local shelters.

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Food **Q.** What bird is with you at every meal?
Funny **A.** A swallow!