



## Healthy kids

August

### How to keep cavities away

We all know it's important to brush your teeth, but there are lots of things you can do to help prevent cavities.

- Limit between-meal snacks, reducing the number of times your child's teeth are exposed to the sugar and starch in some foods, such as milk, bread, cookies and juice.
- Use fluoride, either by drinking fluorinated water (check to see if your community water supply contains it), brushing with a fluorinated toothpaste and/or taking prescription fluoride drops or tablets.
- Save cookies, candy, juice and other sugary drinks for special occasions.
- Make sure to offer your children plenty of healthy meals and snacks, packed with fresh fruits, vegetables and lean meats.

And remember, it's always important to brush your child's teeth twice a day, making sure they spit after brushing. Help them until they are 7 or 8 and can do a good job on their own. Teach good dental hygiene habits today for a lifetime of healthy smiles.

Sources: NIH

### Bright smiles, healthy smiles

Tooth decay is one of the most common conditions of childhood, but it is easily treated and prevented. At age two, start brushing their teeth with a fluoride toothpaste. Have them drink fluorinated water or ask your doctor about supplemental fluoride drops or tablets. Avoid sugary drinks – offer healthy food and snacks including fresh fruits and vegetables and make sure to visit your dentist regularly to ensure healthy teeth and bright smiles.

Source: Medline Plus, Healthy Children, CDC

### Can chewing gum be good?

Guess what? Chewing gum could actually be good for your kids. The ADA has found that chewing a stick of sugar-free gum after a meal helps strengthen teeth and reduce cavities. Two ingredients are to thank. Xylitol acts against harmful bacteria in your mouth and sorbitol increases the flow of saliva – both of which help prevent tooth decay.

As always, make sure your kids are brushing their teeth with fluoride toothpaste and regularly visiting their dentist for checkups and cleanings.

Source: ADA, NPR, CDA

### Trivia time:

#### What's in a toothbrush?

Answer: Today, toothbrush bristles are made of soft nylon – replacing boar, badger and horse hair which was used in the 17th century!