

Adults (age 19 and up)



- Take good care of your teeth because a healthy mouth is related to your overall good health.
- Treat gum disease early on. It is linked to diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and pre-term and low-birth-weight infants.
- Check your mouth regularly for swelling, lumps or redness. Call your dentist if something changes in your mouth.
- See your dentist immediately if you have pain, cuts or new symptoms.
- Practice good oral health and set a good example for your children.

For more information about good oral health for you and your family, visit www.DOHCSmiles.com.

If your child is participating in Medicaid or the Delaware Healthy Children Program, dental visits are covered.

Brought to you by the Delaware Division of Public Health and the Delaware Oral Health Coalition



Healthy Smile. Healthy Family.



- Prevent tooth decay
- Ask about fluoride supplements
- Get dental sealants for children
- Treat gum disease



As a parent you have an important job to help your family have good oral health. Good oral health is directly related to good overall health. Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. Fortunately *it is almost entirely preventable*. These tips will help you and your family have good oral health habits for a lifetime.



Babies (birth to age 1)

Parents:

- Wipe your baby's gums with a clean washcloth after feedings.
- Use a soft bristle toothbrush after your baby reaches six months.
- Avoid putting your baby to bed with a bottle.
- Never put soda or juice in a bottle.
- Protect your baby's mouth against injury when he or she starts to walk.
- Ask your dentist or doctor if your baby needs fluoride supplements. This is important if your drinking water does not have fluoride.
- Visit the dentist when your baby reaches age 1.



Toddlers (age 1 to 3 years)

Parents:

- Wean your toddler from the bottle at 12 months.
- Floss your toddler's teeth that are touching, every day.
- Stop giving your toddler a pacifier at about 17 months.
- Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste at age 2.
- Ask your dentist or doctor if your toddler needs fluoride supplements. This is important if your drinking water does not have fluoride.
- By age three, your toddler should have 20 teeth.
- Visit the dentist with your toddler regularly.

Children (age 4 to 9)



Parents:

- Encourage your child to brush his/her teeth without your help. Make sure you still supervise and check the teeth.
- Encourage your child to stop finger sucking when the first permanent tooth comes in (about age 5 to 6).
- Get dental sealants at age 6 to protect the first permanent molars against decay.
- Give your child a diet rich in calcium to make teeth, gums and jawbones strong and healthy. Include low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.
- Ask your dentist or doctor if your child needs fluoride supplements. This is important if your drinking water does not have enough fluoride.
- Visit the dentist with your child regularly. Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. But it is preventable! Tooth repair can take a lot of time and be costly.



Pre-Teens and Teens (age 10 to 18)

- Limit snacks and beverages that contain sugars and acids (such as sticky foods, sour candy and soda) to prevent tooth decay.
- **DO NOT SMOKE.** Smoking causes cancer, bad breath, gum disease, tooth loss and stained teeth.
- Avoid mouth piercing. It can cause swelling, cracked teeth, choking, uncontrolled bleeding, HIV, tetanus, and hepatitis B, C, D and G.
- Use mouth guards to prevent mouth and face injuries during sports and other activities.
- Get dental sealants at age 11 or 12 to protect the second permanent molars against decay.
- Get tooth decay treated by a dentist early. Decay does not go away and it can get worse and cause other health problems.
- Chew sugarless gum. It helps increase saliva, which can help prevent tooth decay.