

How to Keep Your Teeth Strong

We all have teeth and they are important because they help us to chew our food, to speak clearly and to make our smiles look nice. Because our teeth help us in so many ways, we must remember to take good care of them. The best ways we can care for our teeth are to use fluoride, brush often, see a dentist every six months and limit our intake of sweet, sticky foods. Brush right away, or as soon as possible, after eating sweet, sticky foods.

Like other habits, healthy dental habits are learned at a young age. Dental hygiene can begin with infants. Babies' gums can be cleaned with a soft wet cloth or gauze pad after each feeding. The water from the cloth removes any milk that might stay in their mouths. As children begin to grow teeth, they need to brush their teeth in the morning and before bedtime so that sugar and other food particles from their meals and beverages do not stay in their mouths for a long period of time. Did you know that children as little as one year of age can begin learning how to use a toothbrush? Give them a child size brush with a soft brush. Toothpaste that does not contain fluoride for toddlers under the age of 2 is available. When children can brush without swallowing the toothpaste, they can start using toothpaste with fluoride to help prevent cavities. Remember that toothbrushes need to be changed every 3 months and after illnesses.



Besides caring for our teeth at home and school, we need to visit the dentist too. Explain to kids that the dentist is their friend and he/she is there to help them have shiny teeth and bright smiles.

Experiment Corner



Soft Drinks Make Soft Teeth!

How many sodas do you drink a day? One? Two? Three? More? While people enjoy a soft drink they do not realize that their teeth are getting weakened by the sugar and acid in the soda. Not only does soda cause cavities but it also weakens the teeth. When the acid dissolves it removes the calcium from the teeth. Here is a simple, but effective experiment you can do with your children to show them the harmful effects of soda.

Materials: A dry chicken or turkey bone, a jar or glass, and soda .

Instructions:

1. Put the bone in a jar or glass of soda, then put it aside where it won't be disturbed by siblings, pets or parents for two days. Make sure the bone is soaked in the liquid. This represents what would happen to your teeth if you replaced milk with soda and/or drank 3 to 4 sodas a day, every day.
2. Remove the bone from the soda and feel how soft and rubbery it now is. This is because the soda, which contains acid, has taken the calcium out of the bone.

Question of the month

Who invented the toothbrush?
(Answer on the other side of the newsletter...)

Mexican Pizza Sandwich

A good source of calcium from the cheese, beans and corn tortillas!

Ingredients

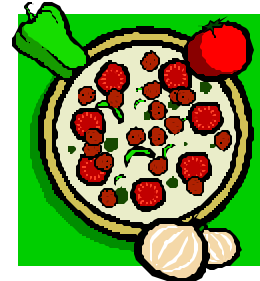
2 corn tortillas (Compare the nutrition labels of corn tortillas and flour tortillas)

Shredded cheese

Refried or mashed red kidney beans

Salt and pepper

- 1) Spread the kidney beans on a tortilla.
- 2) Place it in a flat pan and sprinkle cheese on top.
- 3) Heat the tortilla at medium heat until the cheese melts.
- 4) Add some salt and pepper and top with tortilla.
- 5) Flip the sandwich and heat the other side for another minute.
- 6) Remove when heated and slice into four sections. Enjoy!







Answer to Question of the Month

The Chinese invented the toothbrush over a thousand years ago! When brushing, use a circular motion and brush gently. Remember to brush your tongue and your gums too. Only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste is needed. For safety, parents should help their children with flossing until they are 9 years old .

Children's Books on Dental Health

Here are some books for children that includes caring for their teeth, losing their baby teeth and what to expect when visiting their dentist.

-  My Dentist My Friend by P.K. Hallinan
-  Caillou at the Dentist by Johanne Mercier
-  My Loose Tooth by Stephen Krensky
-  Arthur's Tooth by Marc Brown



We want to hear from you!

Dear Parents and Childcare Providers: Let us know how you encourage a healthy lifestyle in your home or daycare. We want to share your ideas with the rest of Bergen County in future issues. Please contact Robin Chou, Healthy Lifestyles Gazette Editor, Bergen County Department of Health Services, at 201-634-2694 or email: rchou@co.bergen.nj.us

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