

RENEE COMMARATO, D.D.S., M.S., INC.

Pediatric Dentistry
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WELCOME TO OUR PRACTICE

Prevention is our main goal in the fight against dental disease. Good brushing and flossing habits, a diet low in carbohydrates (sugars), regular dental check-ups, fluoride supplementation and treatments, and pit and fissure sealants are some of the instruments we can use to prevent this disease.

Restorations (fillings) in teeth will not last unless the preventive techniques are followed. Routinely we will keep you informed about your child's oral hygiene to help you and your child improve it.

ORAL HYGIENE INSTRUCTIONS

1. An adult must brush the child's teeth until that time when the child develops the manual dexterity to accomplish the task well. It is important to allow the child to discover and participate in his/her oral hygiene practices such as brushing and flossing, but adults should assess the level of understanding and ability of each child on an individual basis. Manual dexterity for some children does not come until age 10 years. It should be emphasized that although a 2-3 year-old child may appear to be "brushing well", the reality of it is that he/she is not able to successfully remove the plaque from all the surfaces of the teeth. Generally an adult needs to be responsible for brushing until a child is 7 ½ - 8 years old, or in second grade, and able to print their alphabet letters an inch high and very neatly.
2. Teeth must be brushed as frequently as possible, especially after meals, in the morning, and prior to going to bed. This is the most important time, since during sleep the salivary flow decreases and with it the ability of saliva to rinse the mouth and decrease acidity. Nothing other than water or a fluoride supplement should be ingested by mouth after brushing at night.
3. Never put an infant to sleep with a bottle in the mouth unless you give them plain water. Any other fluids retained in the mouth for long periods of time or at short intervals may cause the appearance of nursing bottle caries or decay. According to the Academy of Pediatricians and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, children should be weaned off the bottle by their first birthday. Breast milk may also cause nursing decay if the child is fed "at will" (whenever the child wants). Always clean the gingival (gum) of your infant with a piece of cloth. You must start brushing as soon as the first tooth appears, which may vary from child to child, usually around age 5-7 months.
4. Flossing must be done for the child, especially after the contacts of the posterior/anterior teeth close. A toothbrush does not have the ability to physically clean the surfaces in between teeth that are tightly touching. Many cavities form in these surfaces. Again you need to evaluate each child's ability to use floss to prevent any injury to the oral cavity. Generally, an adult will need to be responsible for flossing until a child is 10-11 years old. Prior to that most children do not demonstrate correct flossing in the posterior area.
5. Avoid snacking between meals. If you give a snack, make it a piece of fruit or cheese, or some other snack low in carbohydrates (sugars). Save desserts for after meals. Do not substitute meals for "sweets". Avoid sticky foods such as raisins and foods that will be in the mouth for a long time, such as a lollipop. If you allow your child to chew gum, make it sugar-free. In regards to snacking and juice drinks, the frequency of contact has a great effect on your child's chance of being cavities prone. Please, have a snack time set up rather than at will grazing or munching.

*No fruit snacks, fruit roll-ups, gushers or sticky candies!

We realize oral hygiene practices and diet control are difficult issues with children. We are here to help you. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us. Thank you for helping us help your child.