

# Cavity Free Kids

Many of our young patients have never had a cavity! Here are some hints so your child can be cavity free also!



## Teach kids to take care of their teeth:

Set a good example. Let your child watch and imitate you. Children can begin brushing their own teeth as early as age 2, although you should do a thorough backup brushing until they reach age 6 or 7. Inspect your child's teeth for white, yellow or brown spots, which could be signs of decay. Children should brush at least twice a day, using toothpaste sparingly until your child is able to spit out the excess.

Flossing should also begin around age 2 performed by the parents until the child is old enough to master the skill.

## Sealants:

Sealants are special plastic coatings applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth, where cavities usually begin. Applied in your dental office, sealants form a barrier that keeps food and bacteria out of the tiny grooves in the tooth enamel to reduce the risk of decay. The American Dental Association recommends that all children have sealants applied to their permanent molars when they first appear around age 6 or 7. Sealants may need to be reapplied every 1-3 years.



## Fluoride greatly reduces the risk of cavities:

By combining sealants with fluoride use, it has been shown that cavities can be cut as much as 75%. This would include drinking fluoridated water up through age 10, using fluoride toothpaste regularly (once your child is able to spit out the excess), and having fluoride treatments in the dental office twice yearly. If your child is drinking bottled water, be sure it contains fluoride (most do not).

## Nutrition:

In our practice we find that the majority of cavities come from snacking. Serve smile-saving snacks such as cheese, carrot and celery sticks, fruit and plain popcorn. Limit sweets, especially **soda pop (both diet & regular), energy drinks, gatorade, gum, candy and mints**, these foods contain decay causing acids and sugar. Starchy foods such as crackers, chips, and cereals also allow the bacteria in the mouth to produce decay causing acids. It is best to brush and floss after these foods.



## Dental Visits:

Take your child to the dentist within 6 months after their first tooth appears (usually around 1 year of age), and every 6 months thereafter.

**BE POSITIVE!!! – Let your child discover how much fun it can be to have healthy teeth!!!!**