

Smilematters

PATIENT FACT SHEET

Back-to-School Tips for Keeping Your Child's Smile Healthy!

Did you know that children in the U.S. lose 51 million school hours each year due to dental pain? Make sure your child isn't one of them with these tips from your Michigan Dental Association member dentist!

1. Get a Dental Checkup

Get your child off to a great start to the school year with a visit to the dentist! Your child's dentist will do a thorough exam, probably take X-rays, perform a thorough cleaning, and make recommendations on any needed treatment, such as filling cavities, extraction of wisdom teeth, or extraction of baby teeth that are not falling out fast enough. Your dentist may also recommend preventive measures such as fluoride treatments or the placement of sealants. Your dentist can answer questions you may have and provide your child with instruction on how to best take care of his or her smile.

2. Pack Healthy School Snacks

Diet plays an important role in all parts of health and, of course, everything you eat goes past your teeth. Some snacks like chewy fruit snacks and snack cakes can get stuck in the pits of teeth and expose them to sugar for long periods of time. Besides, picking healthy snacks can help feed your child's brain better, too. Check out cool new products that are easy to carry in backpacks and pockets, such as single use flossers and mini toothbrushes!

3. Limit Soda Pop Consumption

While recent studies have made headlines showing that consumption of soda and sugary drinks are down overall, these same studies show that more than 60 percent of high school students consume sugar-sweetened beverages every day. Children should be educated on

the health risks associated with regular consumption of soda pop, sports drinks, and other sugar-sweetened beverages — risks such as diabetes and obesity. Soda pop, sports drinks and energy drinks, also contain high levels of acid that erode the enamel on teeth. Provide plenty of access to healthy options such as milk, water and 100 percent fruit juices.

4. Wear a Mouthguard

Talk with your dentist about the right mouthguard for your child's sports. A properly fitted mouthguard can prevent serious and sometimes irreparable injury to the teeth, gums and jaw. Your child should wear a mouthguard while playing any contact sport or activities where falls are common, such as rollerblading. There are many different types of guards and options to fit every budget. Make sure your child keeps the bright smile he or she has!

5. Pack these Healthy Snacks for School

- Celery and flavored cream cheese
- Fresh Fruit
- Carrot sticks and ranch dip
- Tortilla wraps — try cream cheese with sliced turkey
- Cottage cheese
- Yogurt — try drinkable yogurts or freeze the tube yogurts
- Crackers and cheese
- Pretzels