

# DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE CLEAN AND HEALTHY TEETH?



## **IT IS AN ADULT'S RESPONSIBILITY!**

Until a child is old enough to really brush their teeth well, it is up to an adult guardian to brush their teeth for them. Everyday. Twice a day. Including flossing!

I get it. It is not fun and it is emotionally draining. Kids will cry, thrash, complain, purse their lips, stick their tongues out, etc.....but rest assured that you are not hurting them; you are HELPING them.

## **BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE DOING A GOOD ENOUGH JOB?**

Check their teeth! Healthy teeth are white and clean and healthy gums are pink with sharp definition.

Inspect your child's teeth for plaque, which is white fuzzy stuff usually at the gumline, for food debris stuck in the biting surfaces of teeth, and also check the gums....they should not be red or puffy and there shouldn't be any blisters or swellings, and they should not be bleeding.

Then, brush their teeth and/or dry them with a cotton roll or makeup pad to remove any plaque and food debris and take a look at the surfaces of the teeth. Do you see any white spots at the gumline? Any brown spots or black spots? Are there any holes in the teeth? Are the gums red or inflamed? Are there any bumps or swellings on the gums?

The photos on the next page will show you a healthy smile and the use of "disclosing solution" to point out what areas need to be cleaned better. Thanks LEO for being an a super model---he takes real good care of things!

After that are photos of unhealthy situations; tooth decay is a serious problem! It is the most common communicable bacterial infection in children, is one of the main reasons kids miss school days, and is a leading cause of day surgery in children. Kids get hospitalized because of decay!

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## INSPECT THEIR SMILES

Leo and his parents do a really good job of keeping his teeth clean and healthy. Take a look!



## USE A "DISCLOSING TABLET"

Get disclosing tablets from your dentist or the pharmacy. It stains the plaque on the teeth to show you where has been routinely missed during brushing. Leo is doing a pretty good job! We often see the teeth COVERED in purple when we do this at the office, but Leo only has a few of areas that need a bit more attention. **An adult helped him do this!**

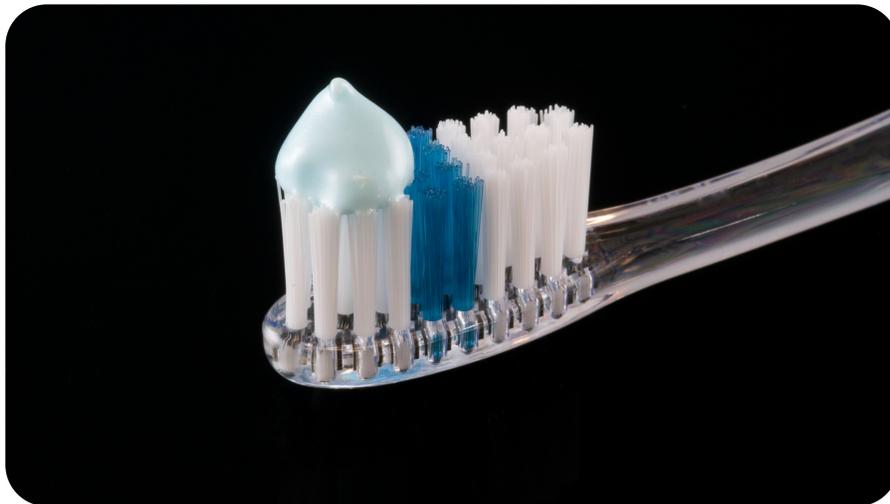


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## BRUSH AND FLOSS REAL GOOD!

Put a TINY amount of FLUORIDATED toothpaste on a soft kids toothbrush and make sure to get all of the disclosing solution off of the teeth. Focus on getting those tough areas every time you brush. Check every few weeks to see how you are doing!



## USE A FLOSS PICK

If you are having a hard time getting in there to floss in between those teeth, use a FLOSS PICK!



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## WHAT DOES TOOTH DECAY LOOK LIKE?

After you have cleaned the teeth, dry them and take a good look!

### EARLY DECAY

White spots are areas where the tooth has demineralized and remineralized; this means that plaque has been on the teeth for too long. Brown spots are early tooth decay!



### TOOTH DECAY

Soft tooth decay is a bad sign! Once we see this, tooth decay is quite advanced. These teeth probably hurt and are at risk of becoming necrotic (dead tooth) and causing abscesses. This may need referral to a specialist or to the hospital!



### ABSCESSSES

This situation is an emergency. The child is at risk of dangerous infections and is probably not feeling well. You may think this is an extreme example, but we do see this situation too often.



**Thanks to Dr. Carter Ng for the photos!**

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NELSON AVENUE DENTAL CLINIC

## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

### NUTRITION

There aren't really any foods that **STRENGTHEN** teeth or fight tooth decay...unless they are high in fluoride, like green tea. Calcium and vitamins are necessary for strong teeth and bones, but they are not going to make your teeth stronger than fluoride can, and they do not fight tooth decay.

A healthy diet, however, can help keep the immune system strong, which is important for developing teeth!

Infections, viruses and antibiotics have been shown to damage developing teeth in young children and even while the baby is growing in mom's belly. Mom has to be healthy too! A healthy body leads to strong teeth.

### SUGARS

The bacteria in the mouth love to eat sugar! They gobble it up and make acid that removes the minerals from the teeth. This is what causes tooth decay.

Be careful not to eat sugar too often, and evaluate your diet for hidden sources of it. Yummy stuff like honey can be bad for your teeth if you eat it frequently throughout the day.

Sticky treats like dried fruits can be hard to remove! Vegetable and cheese puffs tend to get lodged in molars. Be sure to clean that stuff away!!



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## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

### BABY BOTTLES AND BREAST FEEDING

Nursing your child is a vital step in developing a bond, and is critical for nourishment, and for the development of a healthy immune system for your growing baby.

It is important, however, to not let the baby go right to bed after nursing or taking a baby bottle.

Give the teeth a quick wipe or brush, if you can, to help remove as much of the milk as possible before they nap.

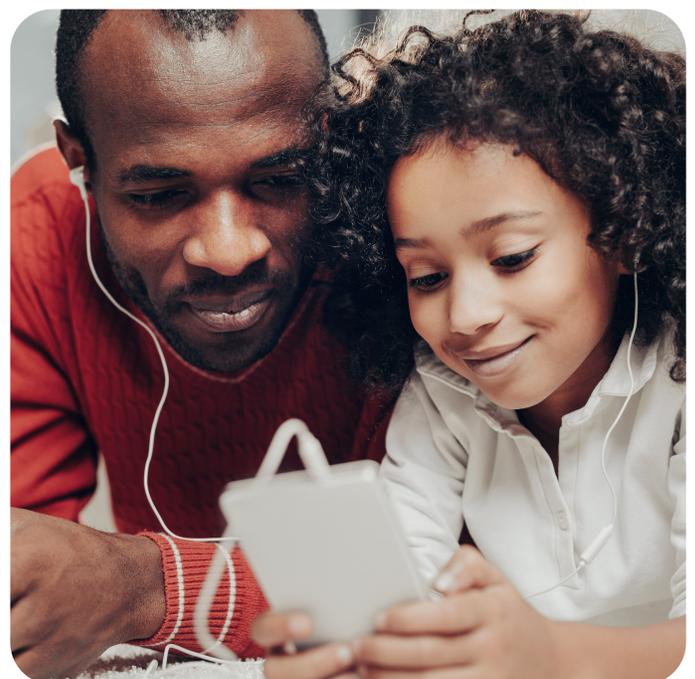
The sugars in the milk can lead to tooth decay very quickly!

### BE A LEADER!

Children learn from their guardians. Take the initiative to instill strong oral health patterns and beliefs in your child.

Brush your own teeth and floss in front of them! Go to the dentist together. If you do not care for your own teeth, how will they?

Having healthy teeth should be a family goal!



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## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

### TOOTHPASTE

Nothing works better than Fluoride toothpaste. It makes the tooth stronger by becoming incorporated in the mineral that the tooth is made of, making it more resistant to acid attack.

No other products STRENGTHEN teeth, but they may help fight bacteria.

Xylitol increases salivary flow, which brings minerals to the teeth for them to absorb, and is not digestible by bacteria so they make less acid. Most of the research on xylitol is in combination with fluoride.

Hydroxyapatite and calcium derivatives help the tooth regain minerals after it has been attacked by acid; they don't make teeth stronger.

### VISIT THE DENTIST

Go to the dentist on a regular basis and most importantly, BEFORE there is a problem. It is important for kids to learn that the dentist is a safe place and is not somewhere they go to get their teeth pulled and given needles every visit. Our office is fun!

There are plenty of programs that help families in need get access to dental care. Get in touch if you have any questions! 250-354-4244.

