

Eat Right to Keep Teeth Strong

Good eating habits help children's and adult's teeth stay healthy.

- ✓ Offer your family a variety of healthy foods, including at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, every day.



- ✓ Include milk and dairy products, which contain calcium, to help build strong teeth.
- ✓ Limit eating sugary and sticky foods, such as chips, cookies, cake, candy, and soda.
- ✓ Don't eat sweets between meals. Save sweets for dessert after a meal. Chew sugarless gum with xylitol for 5 minutes after meals and snacks.

The Food Stamp Program provides healthy food to people with low income. For more information, call (800) 952-5253.

Simple Steps to Avoid the Spread of Tooth Decay

- ✓ Avoid sharing things that have been in your mouth with your child.
- ✓ Chew sugarless gum with xylitol.
- ✓ Use fluoride.
- ✓ Brush and floss every day.
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet.
- ✓ Visit the dentist.

Stop the Spread of Tooth Decay



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For families with children from birth to 5 years

Germs Are the Main Cause of Tooth Decay

- ✓ The germs that cause tooth decay can be spread from your mouth to your child's mouth. This usually happens from age 6 months to two years of age.

- ✓ The spread of germs can happen when mothers share things that have been in their mouths with their children. This includes cups, spoons, straws, pacifiers, and toothbrushes.

- ✓ You can help your children have healthy teeth by lowering the level of germs in your mouth. The tips in this pamphlet will help.



Take Care of Your Own Teeth

- ✓ Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss daily. Look for the American Dental Association (ADA) seal on the toothpaste box.
- ✓ Visit the dentist at least once a year.
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet. Follow the tips in this pamphlet.
- ✓ Chew sugarless gum with xylitol.
- ✓ Ask your dentist or doctor about fluoride products that are best for you and your child.



Use Sugarless Chewing Gum with Xylitol

- ✓ Sugarless chewing gum with xylitol helps control the germs in your mouth that cause tooth decay. The word "xylitol" sounds like "zī-li-tol."
- ✓ Xylitol chewing gum tastes good.
- ✓ Chew xylitol gum for 5 minutes, 3 to 5 times a day, especially after meals and snacks.
- ✓ Do not give gum to a child under age 4.
- ✓ Read the label to see if the gum has xylitol.



Take Care of Your Child's Teeth

- ✓ Breastfeed your child for at least one year.
- ✓ Take your child to the dentist by age one.
- ✓ Brush your child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste after your child is old enough to spit out. Use only a small, pea-sized amount of toothpaste on the brush.
- ✓ Help your child brush his or her teeth until about age 6.
- ✓ Avoid sharing things that have been in your mouth with your child. This includes cups, spoons, straws, pacifiers, or toothbrushes.