

DIET AND CARE OF YOUR CHILD'S TEETH

Being careful regarding certain foods can minimize tooth decay. The bacteria that inhabit the mouth produce acid when they come in contact with certain foods, particularly sugars and starches. Here are some good rules to follow:

1. Minimize your child's consumption of sugary and starchy foods. This is especially true if the foods are sticky.
2. Frequency of contact with these types of food and teeth is also very important. That is why sticky foods are worse; they stay in contact with the teeth longer. Candies that are sucked or licked are also worse. Any of these types of foods that are snacked on over a lengthy period during the day should be avoided. We have found that certain foods that were thought to be healthy are actually bad for teeth. Included in this group are fruit roll-ups and dried fruit; here again it is the sticky, sugary nature of these foods that is a concern.
3. Brushing and flossing are essential to oral health. Teeth should be brushed and flossed at least 3 times per day and especially after meals. Children should practice and learn to floss early on, even when they have only "baby" teeth. A good incentive to brush long enough is a 2 minute sand timer. Also electric toothbrushes are very good and stores carry models for children. The electric toothbrushes usually have a built-in timer. We recommend using a small amount of a fluoride containing toothpaste (use a non-fluoride toothpaste if your child is too young to expectorate it after brushing).
4. The anatomy of some teeth can lead to cavities that are no fault of the parent or child. Your dentist will inform you if this is the case. Dental sealants, seal over deep pits and grooves, and will be recommended to minimize these areas from becoming decayed.
5. Vitamins should be used if recommended by your pediatrician. There are different types of vitamin formulations; consult your pediatrician concerning what is right for your child.
6. We recommend an "over-the-counter" Fluoride rinse for all children (adults can benefit from this also).