Smart Mouths Smart Kids

Improving Dental Health for Colorado Students

DENTAL CARE AT SCHOOL
Keeps Your Child's Teeth Healthy

There are many ways to help children have strong and healthy teeth. Healthy teeth are important for eating, speaking and smiling. Here are some ideas:

- Help children to brush their teeth **twice a day.**

- Teach children to choose **water or milk** and stay away from sugary drinks like soda and fruit juice.

- Give children plenty of **fruits and vegetables** that keep their teeth and bodies healthy.

Sealants Can Help Teeth To Be Strong

Did you know that most cavities are on the chewing surfaces of back teeth? Back teeth are called molars. Another way to give your child's teeth extra protection is to put dental sealants on his or her molars.

Children are usually ready for dental sealants by second grade because their permanent molars grow in when they are between 5 and 7 years old.

A **dental sealant** is a plastic coating that is put on molars to protect them from decay. The sealants can protect the molars for ten years and sometimes longer.

How Can Children Have Dental Sealants Put on Their Teeth?

- They can get sealants at a dental office.

- They can get sealants through the dental program at school.

How Can I Enroll My Child in the School Dental Program?

- Ask school staff or teachers about the program.

- You need to sign a form to give approval for your child to take part in the program and have sealants applied.

How Are Sealants Applied?

Children go to a clean and quiet room at the school. They sit in a dental chair and the dental hygienist puts the sealants on their teeth in three easy steps. **It takes about 15-20 minutes.**

The hygienist will:

1. Clean and dry the tooth surface.

2. Put the wet sealant material onto the tooth.

3. Use a special light to make the sealant dry and harden.

Children then go back to class for their usual activities.

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Keep Your Smiles Healthy

There are things you can do at home together to keep your family's smiles healthy and prevent many dental problems.

Brush your teeth twice a day!

Carefully brush all of your teeth to remove food and bacteria. This will help prevent cavities. Before bed is the most important time to brush.

Drink water!

Water is good for your whole body. Drink water instead of sugary drinks like soda and fruit juice.

Eat healthy!

Choose foods like fruits, vegetables and cheese.

Don't eat too many sweet foods!

Cookies and candy have so much sugar. Only eat them for special treats, and brush your teeth or rinse your mouth after eating sweets.

Chew sugarless gum!

If you chew gum, make sure it's sugarless gum. You might also chew a special gum that has xylitol that can help fight cavities. It slows down the germs that cause cavities.

Did you know?

Toothpaste and tap water, in most cities, have fluoride. Fluoride helps keep teeth strong!