

10 SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR CHILD'S SMILE !

1. Take care of yourself! Your children learn by watching you. Show them that you value a healthy body and smile.



2. Brush daily. Clean your child's teeth twice a day, especially before bedtime. Clean infant gums with a moist cloth. The younger you start, the easier it is to develop good habits.

3. Lift the lip. Children's teeth change quickly. Contact a dentist or doctor if you notice brown or white spots on their teeth.

4. Take your child to the dentist. Children should have their teeth checked by a dentist or doctor by their first birthday.



5. Protect your baby's teeth with fluoride. Fluoride can be found in unfiltered, city water supplies, through fluoride varnish at the dentist, WIC or doctor's office or through a daily doctor prescribed dose.

6. Limit sugar. Bacteria that cause cavities feed on sugar. More sugar=cavities. Limit juices and soda to special events and never in a bottle. Offer water when your child is thirsty.

7. No bottles in bed. Formula, milk and breast milk can cause cavities when left in your baby's mouth while sleeping. Feed your child, clean out their mouth, *then* put them down to sleep.

8. Wean from bottle to cup by age one. Offer a sippy cup around 6 months and increase use of the cup while decreasing the bottle over time. Don't offer either the bottle or a sippy cup as a pacifier. Offer water for thirst.

9. Don't share germs. Cavities are caused by bacteria that are passed from adults to children through saliva. Avoid sharing forks and spoons, toothbrushes or "cleaning off" your child's pacifier with your own mouth.



10. Help your child brush their teeth up to age 8. Little fingers have a hard time reaching all areas of the mouth where bacteria like to hide. Observe your child's brushing and offer suggestions and support when needed.



For more oral health information or to access dental care in west central Minnesota see: ecdn.wcif.org