



Grandparents Corner

September 2015

Dental Hygiene: How to Care for Your Child's Teeth

Good dental hygiene habits should begin before your child's first tooth comes in. Wiping your baby's gums with a soft damp cloth after feedings helps to prevent the buildup of bacteria. When teeth appear, start using a soft children's toothbrush twice a day.

Once your child is preschool age, start using fluoride toothpaste. Don't cover the brush with toothpaste; a pea-sized amount is just right. Young children tend to swallow most of the toothpaste, and swallowing too much fluoride toothpaste can cause permanent stains on their teeth.

What about using fluoride tablets?

Fluoride helps make teeth strong by hardening the tooth enamel. Many cities are required to add fluoride to tap water. If you live in an area where the tap water doesn't contain fluoride, your doctor may prescribe daily fluoride tablets when your child is about six months old. Fluoride is an important part of your child's dental health, but don't give them more than the directions call for. If you miss a dose, don't give your child extra fluoride to make up. Just as with swallowed toothpaste, too much oral fluoride can cause stains on your child's teeth.

What are cavities?

Cavities are holes that are formed when bacteria (germs) in your mouth use the sugar in food to make acid. This acid eats away at the teeth. Cavities are common in children. Good tooth care can keep cavities from happening in your child.

Is my child at risk for cavities?

Your child might be at risk for cavities if he or she eats a lot of sugary foods (such as raisins, cookies and candy) and drinks a lot of sweet liquids (such as fruit juice and punch, soda, and sweetened drinks). Your child also might be at risk if he or she has any of the following risk factors:

- Was born early (prematurely) or weighed very little at birth (low birth weight).
- Has ongoing special health care needs.
- Has white spots or brown areas on any teeth.
- Does not go to the dentist very often.

Does diet affect my child's teeth?

Yes. Avoiding sweets, sticky foods and between-meal snacks is good advice. To avoid cavities, limit sweet snacks and drinks between meals. Have meals and snacks at regular times. Teeth-friendly snacks include foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

Baby bottles can create additional problems with your child's dental health. When liquid from a bottle, like milk and juice, stays in contact with the teeth for a long time, the sugars cause tooth decay. This can create a condition called bottle mouth. Your baby's teeth can develop cavities and become pitted or discolored. Never put a baby to bed with a bottle. Don't let your child walk around during the day with a bottle, and teach your child to use a drinking cup around his or her first birthday

Source: www.americandentalassociation.com

High blood pressure affects many older people, whose bones tend to be weaker, and in whom a fall injury, such as a broken bone, can have serious health consequences. Falls can result in hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries. And even falls without a major injury can cause an older adult to become fearful or depressed, making it difficult for them to stay active.

1. High blood pressure is referred to as “the silent killer” because it usually has no specific symptoms and no early warning signs. T F
2. High blood pressure (hypertension) does not increase someone’s chances of having a heart attack or stroke. T F
3. Medicines, called anti-hypertensives that lower blood pressure, can cause balance problems and dizziness, leading to falls and injuries. T F
4. You, or the person in your care, should NEVER change medications without the doctor’s advice. T F
5. Fainting is never caused by dehydration or standing up quickly. T F
6. Dizziness can mean different things - balance problems, feeling faint, light-headed, weak, or unsteady. T F
7. Water therapy is a safe way for a person with a disability to exercise because there is no danger of falling. T F
8. More than 15 million Americans suffer from coronary artery disease - the Number One killer of both men and women in the United States. T F
9. It is not important for seniors to have their blood pressure checked regularly.
T F
10. An unhappy marriage can cause stress, which can be harmful to cardiovascular health.
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