



Keep Little Smiles Healthy - Oral Hygiene Tips Ages 4-6

Many changes will take place inside your child's mouth between the ages of four and six. Taking an active role in your child's oral health will ensure proper care during these formative years. Maintaining good hygiene as a child will provide a smooth transition from baby teeth to adult teeth and establish a foundation for excellent oral health later in life.

To keep young smiles healthy and happy, we recommend the following:

- When possible, avoid giving your child sticky, gooey, and sugary foods and juices.
- Encourage brushing at least two times a day... more when they've had additional exposure to sweets.
- Encourage your child to brush his/her own teeth for approximately two minutes. Check to ensure he or she cleaned all surfaces—front, back, and tops. If not, a re-brush may be necessary.
- Make sure your child applies a small amount of toothpaste (about the size of a pea) when brushing. Some of the brands marketed to this age group taste good, and your child may end up swallowing too much which could cause fluorosis—a condition that results in tiny white streaks or specks on teeth.
- Teach your children to brush each tooth and the gum line with a gentle circular motion, starting at one end of each row and cleaning all the way to the other end.
- A gentle scrub is enough—brushing too hard can damage gums.
- After brushing, your children should spit toothpaste out, but not rinse with water. Not rinsing ensures fluoride will remain on teeth.
- Flossing once a day is important at this age, as the back teeth are touching now. Flossing is the only way to remove debris from in between the teeth.
- If your water supply is not fluoridated, continue using fluoride supplements to prevent secondary teeth from developing dental disease. Fluoride gel, available in various flavors, will be applied during your child's checkup.