



Back-to-School Dental Health: Do You Know Your ABC's?

Here is some straight “A” advice to help your children keep their teeth healthy and strong. By providing proper instruction, monitoring, encouragement and a positive personal example, you can help your children develop and maintain a healthy attitude about the importance of oral health.

Student Dental Health

- Don't forget to schedule a checkup with the dentist.
- Ask the dentist if your child would benefit from sealants, a plastic coating for the top of back teeth to help prevent decay.
- Around age 9-10, consult with your dentist or orthodontist about if or when your child might benefit from orthodontic care (braces). Not all children need braces.
- Make sure your children drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste to help prevent tooth decay. Bottled or purified water may not include fluoride.
- Involve children in the selection of the type of toothbrush, dental floss and fluoride toothpaste they like. The more involved, the more likely they will form lasting good oral health habits.
- Teach your children that a mouthguard is priority equipment for participating in any sport that could result in a knocked-out or fractured tooth.

“A” is for Attention

Teach your children to pay attention to their teeth every day.

“B” is for Brushing

Brush with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily. Involve your children in the selection of dental supplies.

“C” is for Checkups

Schedule regular dental checkups (frequency depends on the child's needs).

Good Snacking

- Teach children to limit sugar intake in between meals. Sugar is used by the bacteria in plaque to form acids that cause tooth decay.
- Be aware that snacks from school vending machines are mighty tempting. Check to see if your school is one of the many that now include healthier vending machine options.
- Encourage your children to make healthy snack choices, avoid soda and drink lots of water.

Source: American Dental Association: www.ada.org