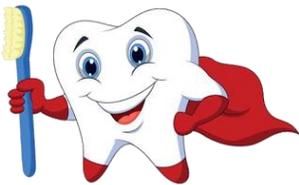


HEALTH & WELLNESS

NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH IS HERE!

Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic conditions affecting young children in the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), 42% percent of children aged 2-11 have had caries in their primary teeth and 19% of adolescents aged 2-19 have untreated cavities. Decayed teeth can lead to pain and infection which can affect your child's ability to learn. It can also lead to other problems such as ear and sinus infections and difficulty speaking. The good news is that tooth decay is largely preventable by practicing good oral hygiene. At Orange County Head Start we strive to assist our families in ensuring optimum oral health and overall wellbeing for their children. This is why one of our organization's goals is that "every child will have a dental exam before they transition to kindergarten". Since February is National Children's Dental Health Month, we thought this would be the perfect time to provide you with information to help you in ensuring that your child's teeth and mouth are in good health.



Quick Tips:

HOW TO MAKE BRUSHING FUN

- 1. BUY A TOOTHBRUSH.** Buy your child a toothbrush with her favorite character on it.
- 2. SING A SONG.** Incorporate a fun song into your tooth brushing routine.
- 3. PRACTICE.** Let your child practice tooth brushing on his/her favorite doll.
- 4. REWARD.** Offer a special reward after each brushing (i.e. reading a favorite book, playing with a favorite toy, a sticker.)

Common Mouth Myths That Can Put Your Child at Risk

Myth #1 - Baby teeth are not important.

It is common for parents to believe that baby teeth are not important because "they will fall out anyway"; however cavities can affect the root of your baby's teeth. The roots of baby teeth help guide permanent teeth into place as they grow in. Baby teeth also play an important role in speech development.

Myth #2 - It is not possible for cavity-causing germs to be passed from person to person.

It is possible. Tooth decay is caused by bacteria that live in the mouth which can be passed to another person through saliva. In fact, transmission of these bacteria commonly occurs from mothers to infants. To prevent the spread of cavities to your infant, do not share food or eating utensils.

WHAT ARE DENTAL SEALANTS?

When brushing their teeth kids tend to miss the hard to reach places in the back of their mouth. Our back teeth have grooves and pits which collect food particles and germs. Overtime, this causes tooth decay. Dental sealants are a quick and easy way to prevent tooth decay. A sealant is a thin, plastic coating applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth (molars). The American Dental Association recommends that children receive dental sealants on their permanent molars as soon as they come in, which is usually between the ages of 5 and 7. The application process for sealants is simple, quick, and painless. After a thorough cleaning, a solution is applied to the teeth to help with bonding and then the sealant is painted onto the enamel of the teeth. The sealant quickly bonds into the grooves of the teeth creating a protective shield against cavities that can last up to 10 years. Talk to your child's dentist to find out how you can get dental sealants for your child.

Does your child have a dental home? To find a dentist in your area, use the Dentist Locator on [InsureKidsNow.gov](https://www.insurekidsnow.gov) or contact your OCHS Health Services Department at: 714-241-8920



HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR BABY'S MOUTH

- 1. CLEAN GUMS.** Clean your baby's gums before teeth come in. Once teeth come in, brush with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, every day.
- 2. NO BOTTLE IN BED.** At nap time, do not put your baby down with a bottle filled with milk or formula
- 3. MILK OR WATER.** Give your child milk or water. Avoid giving your child drinks with added sugar, such as soda, juice or punch.
- 4. MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.** Once your child turns 1 year old they should have their first dental exam. After that, they should have an exam every six months.



Stephanie Ha & Berlina Sanchez

Meet Our H.E.L.P Parents!

Orange County Head Start's Health Education Liaison Program (H.E.L.P.) is a great way for parents to learn about and promote healthy practices. In recognition of National Children's Dental Health Month, this month's workshop- "Bright Smiles, Bright Futures"- is all about oral health. Our representatives, Berlina Sanchez, Stephanie Ha, and Rosalia Vazquez are looking forward to sharing the information they learned at their upcoming Parent Committee meetings.

If you are interested in joining our H.E.L.P. program, please contact our Health Services Department: (714) 241-8920