

Back to School Dental Tips

Even though summer is still in full swing with plenty of time left for lots of activities, we are coming closer to the start of a new school year. This a good time to start considering your child's back to school needs. As you build your child's check-list, remember to include a dental visit as part of the many to-do's. According to the American Dental Association, a dental exam is as important as other routine physical examinations and immunizations¹. Additionally, many do not know that tooth cavities are an infectious disease, for which there is no vaccination. Cavities affect children more than other chronic infectious illnesses^{1,2}.

To help create your child's dental check-list, below are some helpful tips:

Home care: Make sure to include a travel size toothbrush, floss and toothpaste in your child's back to school items. Regular brushing and flossing are necessary for cavity prevention and good oral health. Brushing twice per day and flossing is essential, even for children.

See your dentist: Scheduling an examination now means you can miss the busier late summer/early fall season and will ensure your child will not need to miss school days. Talk to your dentist about sealants and ask if your child is receiving the proper amount of fluoride. Sealants and fluoride help prevent decay.

Ditch the Sugar: Ice cream and sodas are popular treats especially during the summer but when consumed regularly they increase the likelihood of cavities. Try replacing soda or high sugar beverages with water. Encourage healthier options such as fruits, raw veggies or lean protein instead of candy bars, ice cream and other snacks high in sugar.

Wear a mouth guard: They may not be a typical part of your child's sports uniform, but they are smart! If your child play sports, mouth guards are certainly worth the investment. Not only do they protect the teeth, but also protects the cheeks, tongue and the jaw.

To make sure your child is at the top of their game and have a healthy smile to start a new school year, don't forget a dental visit as part of their back to school check list. These tips are also a great way to encourage kids to develop good habits early on.

To find a dentist and schedule an appointment for you child, visit United Concordia's website:

<https://www.unitedconcordia.com/find-a-dentist/>

You can learn more about your dental benefits and oral health information by registering on My Dental Benefits: www.unitedconcordia.com

References:

¹Back-to-school checkup; Journal of the American Dental Association; 2004.

²Children's Oral Health; Centers for Disease Control; November, 2014.