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YOUR CHILD'S ORAL HEALTH

Congratulations on choosing a dental home for your child! Aside from bringing your child in for regular dental appointments, here are some important everyday tips to keep in mind:

- As soon as the first tooth erupts, children should be brushing twice daily with the help of an adult. Daily flossing should begin when contact occurs between two adjacent teeth. Until your child is old enough to spit, he/she should be using a non-fluoridated ("training") toothpaste. Once they learn to spit, they should begin using just a smear of fluoridated toothpaste.
- If your child exhibits discomfort while teething, oral analgesics (Tylenol) or chilled teething rings can be used. Topical anesthetics (Orajel) are discouraged due to the potential for toxicity in infants.
- Diets high in sugar can contribute to tooth decay, and frequent consumption of sugary snacks or drinks can increase that chance. We recommend drinking juice and other sugar-containing beverages with meals, and sticking to water between meals.
- Sticky foods (chewy candy, raisins) and slowly-dissolving candies (lollipops) stay in contact with the teeth for an extended amount of time, which can lead to cavities. Chocolate is more tooth-friendly, since it melts away faster.
- Nighttime bottle feeding with milk, juice, formula, etc. also increases risk for decay. After brushing, only water should be consumed.
- Did you know that parents can transfer decay-causing bacteria to their children? Try to avoid saliva-sharing behaviors (sharing spoons and cups, or cleaning dropped pacifiers with the mouth). And remember that keeping your teeth healthy with regular dental visits and fluoride use can mean that your child will grow up with healthy teeth!
- The fluoride varnish that we apply at the end of your child's dental visit is meant to stick to the teeth for the rest of the day, so remember not to brush or floss tonight, and avoid crunchy foods (taco shells, pizza crust) that can scrape the fluoride off.
- Your town does / does not have fluoridated water.
 - Even if your child is not necessarily drinking the water, as long as you are cooking with it, they are receiving enough systemic fluoride to aid in strengthening the teeth forming in the jaw. (If you have well water, you will need to have it tested for fluoride content.)
 - Since your town's water is not fluoridated, supplemental fluoride tablets may be indicated for your child.