

Pointers For Parents

Simple Tips For Creating Healthy Smiles That Last A Lifetime

(NAPSA)—Oral health can have a significant impact on overall health and well being of kids yet more than 50 percent of 5- to 9-year old children have at least one cavity or filling, according to the U.S. Surgeon General's report on oral health in America. The report also states that tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease, five times more common than asthma.

Every family needs to make oral health a priority. These simple tips from Crest make brushing a fun and enjoyable routine for kids.

- **Brush with the right tools**

Kid-inspired toothbrushes come in fun shapes, colors and patterns that are specially sized with smaller heads and larger handles to aid in control. Select a toothbrush with soft bristles and rounded ends that provide gentle cleaning.

- **Fun-flavored toothpaste means fun brushing**

Children's toothpaste comes in an array of flavors and colors, such as bubble gum and sparkles, so let the kids choose their own tubes. Make sure to choose toothpaste that has fluoride to help strengthen tooth enamel and prevent cavities. Children under 6 should brush twice a day using a pea-size dab of toothpaste.

- **Music Makes the Minutes Go By**

One of the best ways to make sure kids are brushing for the recommended three minutes is to pick a fun song of the same length to play while they brush. Start the song as soon as the toothbrush touches the first tooth and continue to brush for the duration of the song.

- **Award gold stars for outstanding oral practices**

Children should brush their teeth twice a day, so keep track of their daily brushing on a calendar by using gold stars. At the end of each week, award a special prize if there are two stars for each day of the week.



Boys & Girls Clubs of America kids practice good oral health skills in a giant way by brushing a 25-foot mouth.

- **Keep toothbrushes in view and within reach in the bathroom**

Make sure the kids can reach their toothbrushes and toothpaste by keeping them on the counter or in a stick-on cup attached to the wall. If the dental tools are always in sight, they act as reminders that it's brushing time.

- **Get the kids in the right frame of mind**

Trips to the dentist can be a scary experience for some young children, so prepare them beforehand. Give kids an idea of what to expect during a dental visit with role-playing exercises, or using picture books to familiarize kids with dental tools. Children should see the dentist every six months for a complete oral checkup.

- **Brush with your kids**

The more the merrier! Lead by example to teach your kids that brushing and flossing is an important part of their daily routine.

In response to the U.S. Surgeon General's report, Crest has teamed up with Boys & Girls Clubs of America on Crest Healthy Smiles 2010, a program designed to provide oral health education and tools to underprivileged children nationwide.

For a free brochure with oral health tips and more information on Crest Healthy Smiles 2010, call 1-877-289-6322. Also, check out the Crest Family Care Center on the Web at www.crest.com.