

# DENTAL HEALTH

## New Guides Help Parents Curb Kids' Cavities

(NAPSA)—To help keep a healthy smile for life, dental care should begin at an early age.

Two new guides are making that goal easier by helping parents and children assess their risk for tooth decay.

The MetLife Dental Pediatric Risk Assessment Guides were written to help inform people about their oral health risk for tooth decay and appropriate levels of dental care among children and their parents.

One guide is intended for parents to evaluate their child's risk for tooth decay while the other is designed for children who are old enough to assess their own oral health care risks.

The guides use a series of questions to help parents and children identify personal factors that may be associated with a higher risk for tooth decay. The guides also offer information that may help reduce that risk.

Focusing on sugar intake, brushing and flossing habits and fluoride exposure, parents and children are encouraged to discuss preventive measures with their dentist.

By improving dentist-patient communication, it's hoped that oral health problems may be detected earlier for the most effective treatment.

"By learning how to reduce their risk of tooth decay, children can take steps to improve their oral health now and develop good habits that will last them throughout their lifetime," said Dr. Alan



**Reducing your risk for tooth decay may be easier than you think. Two new guides offer tips.**

Vogel, vice president, MetLife Dental Product Management. "Ultimately, this can lead to fewer lost school days today and fewer lost workdays later in life due to dental care issues."

"A successful approach to oral health care emphasizes personal risk assessment, early recognition, prevention and intervention when treatment needs are minimal. A critical component is the proactive involvement of patients. Even young children should be made aware of the concept of prevention and what it can accomplish," said Dr. James Kennedy, Dean Emeritus of the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine and Chair of the MetLife Dental Advisory Council.

To find the guides, visit [www.lifeadvice.com](http://www.lifeadvice.com) and click on the heading "Calculators and Tools."