

Children's Health Update

Kids: Brush Your Teeth, No More Excuses

(NAPSA)—When it comes to kids, ensuring proper oral health care doesn't have to be a daunting task. Although in a recent survey of 2000 adults, 39 percent said they find it challenging to engage their children in brushing their teeth, it can—and should—be done.

While it might seem like a harmless problem, in reality children miss more than 50 million hours of school each year due to dental-related illness. According to Fern Ingber, president and CEO of the National Children's Oral Health Foundation (NCOHF), "Millions of children have dental problems so severe that it impacts their ability to eat, sleep and learn."

Fortunately, associations like NCOHF and the American Dental Association (ADA) are committed to educating parents and children alike on dental protection and cavity prevention. "The problem is so widespread that the U.S. Surgeon General has named dental disease a 'silent epidemic,'" Ingber said.

How To Engage Your Child

Pediatric dentists recommend starting a regimen as soon as your child's teeth first emerge. By using a washcloth and water to gently clean teeth, you can instill a daily habit early on. At about age two, brush your child's teeth with a small brush and pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste for two minutes, both day and night. By the time your child is able to brush on his or her own, around age six, he or she will have a familiar schedule to follow. Often, however, kids find these routines to be monotonous, which is why it's no surprise that of parents with children between six and 12, 68 percent said they believe their kids would brush more frequently if it were more enjoyable.



Dentists encourage screenings and cleanings for children's teeth every six months to keep decay away.

A great way to make this experience more stimulating is to have an easy step-by-step method for your child to follow, for instance, a three-step routine that incorporates a pre-brush rinse, brushing and flossing and an after-brush rinse. Products such as Inspector Hector Plaque Detector make the experience even more fun: With a few swishes of the pre-brush rinse, your child can see plaque buildup turn blue, indicating the areas to brush. After brushing these spots away and flossing, he or she can finish the routine with the Inspector Hector Tooth Protector rinse that contains fluoride to protect enamel and strengthen teeth.

Beyond a daily regimen, dentists emphasize the importance of an oral assessment between ages one and two, and encourage screenings and cleanings every six months to keep decay away.

More helpful and fun information on how to keep your child smiling can be found on the Internet at www.inspector-hector.com, www.ncohf.org and www.1800dentist.com.