

Children's Health

Protecting Children's Oral Health Year-Round

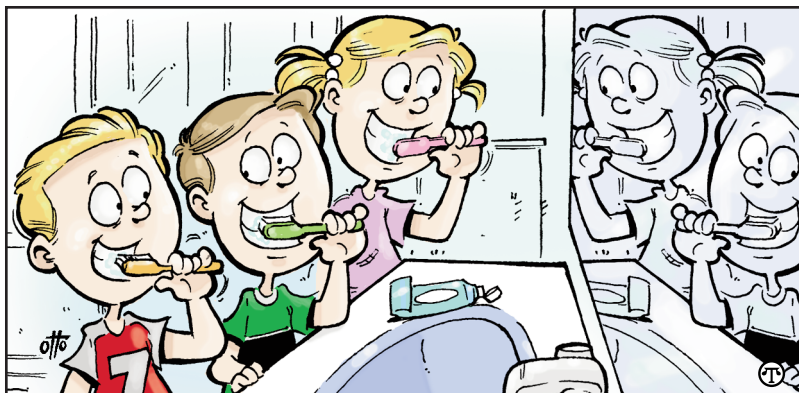
(NAPSA)—The end of a long vacation from school could actually give children reason to smile.

Dentists say that school breaks often mean a break from the healthy oral care routines children establish when school's in session. That could leave youngsters at increased risk of cavities and other common oral health issues. "A school morning routine is an ideal time for parents to reinforce proper hygiene habits that ensure kids maintain strong teeth and healthy gums year-round," explained Beth Truett, President and CEO, Oral Health America. "By empowering moms and dads with information about good oral care habits, such as brushing and flossing, we can impact a child's overall health for life."

Tooth decay is considered the most common chronic childhood disease—five times more common than asthma—according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The department also reports that more than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness.

Fortunately, good oral health habits can keep tooth decay at bay. To help teach students and parents this important lesson, Trident gum has partnered with Smiles Across America (SAA), a program that links schools and dental care providers to help fight untreated oral disease. The company's support has enabled SAA to double the number of children it cares for and expand services for more children in underserved communities. Smiles Across America offers these oral care tips:

- Brush twice a day, after breakfast and before bedtime, to remove food particles and plaque. Plaque



Brushing, flossing and seeing a dentist can help protect kids from the most common chronic childhood disease—tooth decay.

causes tooth decay and gum disease.

- Use a soft toothbrush so you don't scratch teeth or gums.
- Brush both the teeth and gums, especially the areas where teeth and gums meet, and the chewing surfaces of teeth.
- Brush after eating or drinking, especially after meal time.
- Adults should supervise toothbrushing, giving a second brushing after kids have brushed to make sure teeth are clean.
- Floss every day to remove food and plaque from between teeth and under gums. If plaque is not removed, it can harden into tartar—a hard, yellow buildup.
- Visit the dentist every six months to one year for cleanings and checkups, beginning at age 1, when baby teeth are coming in.

The Role Of Nutrition

At any age, a complete oral health program includes sound nutritional habits. Many of the foods that help build strong muscles and bones in children also help build strong, healthy teeth and gums.

For instance, dairy products

provide calcium and vitamin D for strengthening teeth and bones, while breads and cereals supply B vitamins and iron for healthy gum tissue. For snacks, choose foods such as cheese, raw vegetables, plain yogurt or fruit, and limit the amount of fruit juice each day.

Protecting Teeth

Children who play sports should wear a mouth guard to protect their teeth. These devices typically cover the upper teeth, and are designed to guard against broken teeth and other damage to the mouth. Kids who wear braces or other fixed dental appliances on their lower jaw might also need a guard for their lower teeth. Ask your dentist.

How You Can Help

Consumers can help aid Smiles Across America and its support for pediatric oral care by picking up a package of Trident gum from 9/1/09 through 9/7/09, when Trident will donate \$.05 per purchase, up to \$600,000, to Smiles Across America. For more information on Smiles Across America, visit www.tridentcares4kids.org.