

Your Child's Teeth

(Helpful Tips for Parents and Caregivers)

As our daily lives seem busier and faster-paced than ever, one phrase comes to mind: The future is now. A child's oral healthcare habits today will have an impact on their health as an adult. The good news is that preventative dental care has dramatically improved the oral health of many children. It is now possible for kids to reach adulthood without ever experiencing tooth decay! However, tooth decay remains a serious public health problem. It is the most common chronic childhood disease that will not resolve without treatment. It is five times more common than asthma. Throughout the next few newsletters, we will be presenting some simple steps you can take to help your child enjoy a lifetime of beautiful smiles.

Part 1

Mother's Health Before Baby Arrives

A mother's decay-causing bacteria can be transmitted to her child, so it is important to have maternal teeth free of decay before the birth. Pregnant women may have the desire to eat more frequently between meals. While this is normal, this can be an invitation to tooth decay. As we know, the decay process begins with that sticky invisible layer of bacteria – PLAQUE- that constantly forms on teeth. These bacteria convert sugars to an acid that attacks tooth enamel.

Plaque that is not removed can irritate gums, making them red, tender and more likely to bleed. This condition is called Gingivitis and can lead to more serious periodontal disease that affects the gums and bone that anchor the teeth. Due to the considerable rise in hormones during pregnancy, Gingivitis can be common during the 2nd – 8th months of pregnancy. Poor periodontal health in the mother may lead to adverse pregnancy outcomes like premature delivery and low birth weight of the baby. Mothers should see a dentist regularly throughout pregnancy.

A balanced diet is critical for the proper development of an unborn child. Teeth begin to form in the 2nd month of pregnancy and harden between the third and sixth months of pregnancy. A balanced diet that provides adequate amounts of vitamins A, C and D, protein, calcium, and phosphorus helps develop healthy teeth. Inadequate nutrition, on the other hand, may result in poorly formed tooth enamel that may make a child more likely to develop cavities once the teeth have erupted.

Next month we will be discussing "Baby's first Teeth". For more information on decay and prevention, please visit our website: www.rinehartdentist.com

P.S. A reminder to patients with insurance: The end of the year is fast approaching! Make sure to schedule any unfinished treatment to maximize your insurance benefits!

*Respectfully,
Dr. Rinehart and Staff*