

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR CHILD TO BE CAVITY FREE?

We understand how busy you are raising your children, but if you take a few minutes to read this page, you can maximize your time with us and have a head start on the best ways to prevent tooth decay!

Dr. Drew's Basic Facts about Cavities

Children's teeth (baby teeth and "new" permanent teeth) are more susceptible to cavities because the outer layers of enamel are immature. It takes about four years for the outer layers of enamel to mature. This makes our children's teeth more susceptible to snacking and sipping habits than our own teeth.

Four things are needed to create a cavity...

1. **TEETH**
2. **BACTERIA** (known as plaque)
3. **CARBOHYDRATES** (obviously sugar, but ANY man-made carbohydrate can work)
4. **TIME** (for all three of the above to get together and "have a party" on our teeth)

If the first three "party together" long enough and frequently enough, then they create acids which break down enamel – and presto, cavities form!

GOOD NEWS! If any one of the above factors is eliminated, a cavity cannot form! All our children have teeth, so the other three factors are what we have to limit to prevent cavities and help our children grow up with beautiful smiles!

What can we do to help prevent cavities? The ways to fight tooth decay are listed below.

Bacteria (i.e. plaque): We all have it everyday, it constantly forms, and we should remove it two or three times a day by brushing and, let's be honest, occasionally flossing.

"Refined Carbs" (sugar and others): This is probably the biggest factor which we have control over, yet our diets are leading to more cavities in kids than those raised prior to the explosion of sippy cups, sodas, sport drinks, juice boxes, and chocolate milk – many of which are marketed as "healthy". Look at the back of some of these drinks and check the sugar content. You will be amazed! If sipped frequently they may lead to lots of cavities. A major point of emphasis: It is not the amount of sugary stuff we get, but the FREQUENCY with which we sip or snack, that leads to cavities in kids. For example, a box of juice drank with a snack and finished in ten minutes is less harmful than sipping on the box for an hour!

Time: If we eat a sugary snack that's sticky and lays on our teeth a long period of time, then that frequent "bathing" of teeth in small amounts of sugar, really adds up...to cavities! Remember, we mentioned the amount of refined carbohydrates is not as big a factor as the frequency. If we

limit the amount of time these “refined carbs” hang around our child’s teeth, then we give our children a great start to beautiful teeth and ultimately better habits for a healthier, happier child!

The following summarizes ways to prevent cavities:

- ▣ Make smart choices for sipping and snacking between meals.
- ▣ Limit sugar snacks and drinks – eat snacks in a few minutes instead of “grazing”.
- ▣ Brush two or maybe even three times a day, especially right before bedtime.
- ▣ Try to floss every day.
- ▣ Visit your dentist for regular “continuing care” check-ups.
- ▣ Sometimes if your child is a “quick cavity grower”, we might recommend fluoride varnishes, xylitol products, mid-day brushings, or more frequent x-rays and cleanings.

Well, that’s the “skinny” on fighting cavities and helping to create cavity free kids! We look forward to seeing you soon! If you have questions, use the space provided below. There is also a check list for things to bring on the first visit.