

ORAL HEALTH TIPS FOR CHILDREN AGED 7-12



PREVENT CAVITIES

At this age, children are more capable of taking care of their own teeth. But they still need guidance and, in some cases, supervision from parents and guardians. Help them develop strong oral hygiene habits with the following gentle reminders.



- Clean between the teeth every day using floss, soft picks or a small interdental brush.

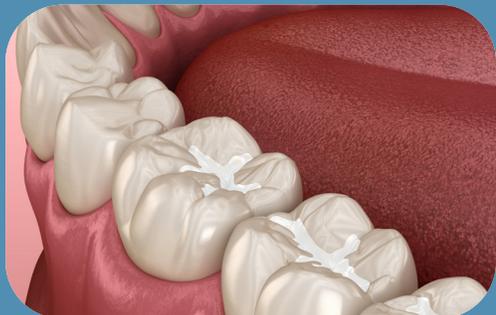


- Brush all tooth surfaces twice a day for at least 2 minutes with a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste. (Using a 2-minute timer is a fun way to make sure that every tooth is brushed!)



- Choose water over fruit juice or pop, and eat healthy snacks such as apples, raw vegetables, cheese, and plain yogurt.

Scheduling regular preventive oral care check-ups for your child is also important. Your child's dental hygienist will make sure that they are using proper toothbrushing techniques to keep their mouth clean. They may also recommend other treatments such as fluoride varnish or dental sealants to prevent cavities.



WHAT ARE DENTAL SEALANTS?

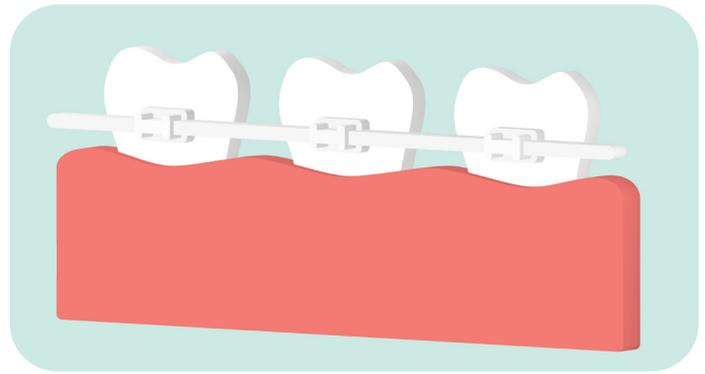
Permanent ("adult") molars start to come in between ages 6 and 12. These new molars can have deep grooves on the chewing surface that trap food and bacteria, increasing the risk for cavities if not brushed properly. Your child's dental hygienist may recommend the application of dental sealants, which are a thin coating painted on the teeth to cover these grooves and prevent cavities for many years.



ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

Children in this age group may be referred to an orthodontist for a check-up to see how their face and jaws are growing, how their teeth are closing together, and if there are any other factors that may affect how their teeth will function in the future. The orthodontist will advise if any treatment is or will be needed.

While undergoing orthodontic treatment, your child will need to use an interdental brush, a floss threader or an oral irrigator to prevent cavities, tooth demineralization (permanent white spots), and gingivitis (inflammation of the gums). Dental hygienists will show your child how to care for their teeth and mouth while they have braces and for their fixed or removable orthodontic appliances. A power toothbrush is highly recommended to help clean around brackets.



DID YOU KNOW?

Starchy and sugary snacks such as bread, crackers, chips, granola bars, and candy form a sticky build-up between the teeth, which can be hard to remove. This build-up, known as dental plaque biofilm, is acidic and attacks tooth enamel, increasing the risk for cavities. For suggestions on how to cut back on sugar-rich food and drinks, visit dentalhygienecanada.ca/sugar.



PRETEENS

Children ages 9 to 12 experience physical and emotional changes that may affect their oral health. During this period, their remaining primary teeth will be replaced by permanent ones. Hormonal changes combined with environmental factors such as longer sleep patterns, a growing preference for sugary drinks and starchy foods, and less enthusiasm for oral hygiene can increase their risk for cavities, gingivitis, and bad breath. Your child's dental hygienist will remind them of the importance of good at-home oral health care practices, healthy dietary choices, and regular dental hygiene care appointments.

Working together, parents, guardians, and oral health professionals can provide children with the oral care tools they need to become healthy and thriving teenagers.



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