

# A PARENT'S GUIDE

Caring for  
Children's  
Teeth.



Teething Toddlers to Teens,  
One Smile at a Time.

# Oral Care in America THE ISSUE

*In May 2001, the Office of the Surgeon General released its first ever report on oral health in America.\**

The findings revealed that:

- ☺ Tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease.
- ☺ Millions of school hours are lost each year to dental-related diseases.
- ☺ Poor suffer twice as many dental problems than their affluent peers.

\* Visit [www.dentalcare.com](http://www.dentalcare.com) to access the Surgeon General's report.



The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry is the professional specialty organization dedicated to improving and maintaining the oral health of infants, children, adolescents and persons with special health care needs.

# Crest® is HELPING

*Crest® Healthy Smiles 2010 is a national outreach program designed to help improve the state of oral health in America. By providing education, oral care tools and increased access to dental professionals, we hope to reach 50 million children and their families by the year 2010.*

## Crest® Healthy Smiles 2010 Program Plans include:

- Making every Boys & Girls Club a “Cavity-Free Zone” – a place where good oral health is a priority. All 3,000 Clubs can participate in the oral health education program and use our website designed especially for the over 3 million Club members.
- ☺ Building full-service dental clinics in six Boys & Girls Clubs, including New York, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles, in 2002.
- ☺ Partnering with leading dental schools, such as Columbia University and University of Southern California, to sponsor mobile dental vans, provide screenings, treatment, education and oral care tools to kids in need of care.
- ☺ Teaming up with the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry to provide screenings, treatment, education and dental services to children.
- ☺ Enrolling dental professionals nationwide to deliver oral health education to kids in their community. In the first 3 months of the program, almost 100 dental professionals have provided education to over 45,000 kids.
- ☺ Applying the proceeds from the sale of Crest towards the above programs and to providing Crest toothpaste and toothbrushes to underserved communities.



# Healthy Teeth FROM BIRTH.

*From healthy baby gums come healthy baby teeth. That's why you need to start providing good oral care for your children right from birth.*

## How can I care for my baby's gums?

### A gentle wipe does wonders

After each feeding, breast or bottle, gently wipe your baby's gums with a clean gauze pad.

## What about teething?

### Help for a cranky baby

The discomfort of teeth coming into the mouth can cause your baby to become irritable. Signs of teething, in addition to fussiness, are drooling and the urge to mouth objects. A temperature of less than 100° is considered normal while teething. If your child has a fever while teething, call your physician. You can ease some of the discomfort by lightly rubbing your baby's gums with a clean finger or a wet gauze pad. A cool teething ring can also help soothe a baby's tender gums.

## What should I do about thumb or pacifier sucking?

### Current attitudes on breaking the habit

The catchall term for the various oral sucking habits of children is non-nutritive sucking. This includes thumb or finger sucking and the use of pacifiers. Most contemporary pediatric health providers agree that these habits have important formative and nurturing functions and, at least for the first few years of life (up until about age 4), should be ignored.

There is almost universal agreement that sucking should cease before permanent teeth begin to appear. The duration and intensity of sucking seems to be more important in determining dental changes. A critical issue with pacifiers is safety. A pacifier should be resistant to breakage, designed to prevent airway obstruction, kept clean, and never secured around your child's neck. Consult your pediatrician on your child's sucking habits.



# From That FIRST TOOTH FORWARD.

*How exciting! That first tooth. As soon as the first teeth appear, it's time to start taking care of them on a daily basis to help ensure against cavities. Giving your baby regular oral cleanings after each meal instills good habits early in life.*

## When will my baby's teeth come in?

### 20 teeth in 3 years

Central incisor - 6 to 12 months

Lateral incisor - 9 to 16 months

Canines - 16 to 23 months

First molars - 13 to 19 months

Second Molars - 22 to 33 months



Baby's teeth begin forming even before birth. All 20 primary teeth – also called baby teeth – are present in a child's jawbones at birth. The lower two front teeth are typically the first to erupt, usually sometime around six months after birth. Do not be concerned if your baby is a little late. By age 3, all 20 primary teeth should be present.

## What is "Baby Bottle Tooth Decay"?

### You can avoid this decay

One common way a baby can develop cavities is called "baby bottle tooth decay." It occurs when a child's teeth are frequently exposed to sugary liquids for long periods. Among these are milk (including breast milk), formula, fruit juice and other sweetened liquids. Never use the feeding bottles as a pacifier. If you must give your baby a bottle at bedtime or naptime, make sure it contains plain water. Also, you should not give a baby a pacifier that has been dipped in honey or sugar.



## When should brushing begin?

### When to start brushing

You should start cleaning your child's teeth as soon as they appear. A small, pea-size dab of fluoride toothpaste can be used after the child is old enough not to swallow it. Gently brush (see brushing method on page 5). One of the best ways to encourage brushing is to be a good role model. Many parents brush their own teeth while brushing their child's, making brushing a fun time together.



## What about the right toothbrush?

### There are so many to choose from!

Children need to use a child's size toothbrush. These are designed specifically for the size and shape of a child's mouth and hands. For example, a large handle can help children control their toothbrush. Soft bristles with rounded ends provide gentle cleaning of teeth and delicate gum tissue. Bright colors or fun patterns can help encourage brushing and make oral care fun.

## Which kind of toothpaste should I choose?

### Kids use what they like

One of the best ways to keep your child brushing is by having fluoride toothpaste on hand that is pleasing and easy to use. The taste can make brushing a more enjoyable experience, leading to more thorough brushing. Brushing twice a day results in increased fluoride applications to help strengthen tooth enamel and more opportunities to remove plaque.



## What's the best way to brush?

### Technique IS important

For infants, dentists and hygienists often recommend that parents use a simple, gentle, short, back and forth motion to brush and remove plaque.

Once children are older, the following method is recommended.



- ☺ On outer and inner surfaces: Place toothbrush at a 45-degree angle; start along gumline; use gentle, short, tooth-wide strokes against the gumline.



- ☺ On chewing surfaces: Hold the brush flat and brush back and forth.



- ☺ On inside surfaces of front teeth: Tilt brush vertically; use gentle up-and-down strokes with toe of brush.



- ☺ Brush teeth long enough to thoroughly clean all tooth surfaces. The brushing motion itself helps remove stains, so don't cut short the effectiveness. Remember to brush the tongue. Use a back-to-front sweeping method to remove food particles and freshen your child's mouth. Remember to gently brush the roof of the mouth, too.

(Source: Crest Dental ResourceNet)

## Should children floss?

### An essential to good oral health

Flossing daily removes plaque and food particles between teeth and below the gumline. Teaching your children to floss is essential to their oral health. You will have to help your youngest children floss. You should start flossing your child's teeth even when they have only their primary teeth. To floss properly, wrap an 18-inch strand of floss around your middle fingers and hold a one-inch section tightly, then...

1. Ease floss between teeth. Gently clean up and down several times while curving around teeth at the gumline.
2. Always floss behind the last tooth. Unwind clean floss as you proceed.
3. Be careful not to push floss into the gums.

(Source: Crest Dental ResourceNet)



## What role does nutrition play in healthy dental development?

### Good diet = healthier teeth

Healthy eating habits lead to healthy teeth. Many snacks that children eat lead to cavity formation. Choose nutritious snacks for your child, such as vegetables, low-fat yogurt, fruits, and low-fat cheese which are healthier and better for your children's teeth.

### Why are enamel and fluoride important?

#### The building blocks of healthy teeth

Enamel • Dentin • Pulp • Gum • Bone • Crown • Root  
Enamel, the hardest substance in the body, is the outermost layer of the tooth and protects the tooth from decay. Fluoride, a naturally-occurring substance, strengthens tooth enamel, making it more resistant to decay. Some common sources of fluoride are fluoridated drinking water, fluoride-containing toothpastes, and fluoride mouth rinses. Your dentist or pediatrician may recommend or prescribe additional fluoride treatments. Be sure to follow his/her instructions closely because too much fluoride can alter the appearance of your child's teeth.



# Time To Go TO THE DENTIST.

*Children should visit the dentist by their first birthday. Ask friends and family and select a dentist in your area who likes children and takes care of them regularly. The first relationship your child has with a dentist can leave a lasting impression.*

## **How can I prepare my child for the first dental visit?**

### **Fun, not fear**

You can make your child's first visit to the dentist enjoyable and positive. Tell your child in advance that someone will look at their teeth and clean them. Try showing them pictures of dentists or have fun role-playing, acting like you or your child are the dentist. Most dentists prefer that a parent be present for the examination of any child under the age of three. Some ask the parent to sit in the dental chair and hold the young patient in their lap during the first few examinations. It can also be helpful to take a your younger children along for an older sibling's dental visit so that they can get accustomed to the office and the people. As children get older, they are usually happy to be "grown up" and willing to sit in the chair alone while they send their parents back to the waiting room. At the first visit, your dentist will examine your child's mouth for early signs of decay and other problems. The dentist will tell you many of the things you'll need to know about helping your child grow up cavity-free. Make sure your child sees the dentist regularly.

## **Are X-rays of primary teeth necessary?**

Although primary teeth are in your child's mouth for only a few years, it is very important that they are kept in the best health. Your dentist may want to take an x-ray to detect any unseen cavities that need to be filled, or to make sure the adult teeth that are forming below the gum's surface are in good position.

## **What are dental sealants?**

### **The extra layer**

Today, most cavities occur on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth. Dental sealants provide specific protection against that kind of cavity. A dental sealant is shaded plastic material that is painted directly into the grooves on the chewing surfaces of the tooth. The sealant acts as a barrier protecting enamel from plaque and acids.



# Braces & RETAINERS.

*Braces and retainers are part of “orthodontics”, a special discipline of dentistry concerned with aligning the teeth and jaws to improve your child’s smile and oral health. Through orthodontic treatment, problems like crooked or crowded teeth, overbites or underbites, incorrect jaw position, and disorders of the jaw joints are corrected.*

**When is the right time for braces and how long do they have to stay on?**

**Kids of all ages have them and treatment varies**

Every child’s situation is different, but an ideal time for placement of braces is between 8 and 14 years of age while the head and mouth are still growing and teeth can be more easily straightened.

The more complicated the spacing or biting problem and the older your child is, the longer the period of treatment, usually. Most kids can count on wearing full braces between 18 and 30 months, followed by the wearing of a retainer for at least a few months to up to two years. The retainer sets and aligns tissues surrounding straightened teeth.

**Will my child have to avoid any foods or personal habits?**

**Good tips to follow**

Your child should avoid sweets, chips, and soda. Sugary and starchy foods generate acid and plaque that can cause tooth decay and promote gum disease. Sticky, chewy sweets like caramel can cause wire damage and loosen brackets. Hard crunchy snacks like popcorn, nuts, and hard candy can break braces. Also, you should cut foods like carrots or apples into smaller pieces.

More don’t’s: ice cube chewing, thumb sucking, excessive mouth breathing, lip biting, and your child pushing his/her tongue against the teeth.



**What about oral hygiene?**

**More important than ever**

Braces have tiny spaces where food particles and plaque get trapped. Your child should brush carefully twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and a soft-bristle toothbrush and rinse thoroughly. They should also floss between braces and under wires with the help of a floss threader. Teeth should be cleaned by a dental professional regularly to keep gums and teeth healthy. Insufficient cleaning while wearing braces can cause enamel staining around brackets or bands.





## More Things

# PARENTS SHOULD KNOW.

*Here are answers to some of parents' other most frequently asked questions regarding their children's teeth and oral health.*

### **Can antibiotics stain my child's teeth?**

Yes. Some types of antibiotics can cause permanent discoloration of the teeth. Be sure to discuss this with your pediatrician or family practitioner when antibiotics are prescribed.

### **Does mouth breathing affect the formation of teeth?**

If your child is a mouth breather, consult your dentist and pediatrician. Mouth breathing can be the result of an obstruction caused by enlarged tonsils or adenoids or from chronic nasal congestion. It can lead to dental abnormalities that may require professional correction such as braces.

### **Should children wear mouthguards when playing sports?**

Considering more than 200,000 injuries to the mouth and jaw occur each year, dentists support the use of mouthguards in a variety of sports activities. Mouthguards

are effective in moving soft tissue in the oral cavity away from the teeth, preventing laceration and bruising of the lips and cheeks, especially for children who wear braces.

Clean with cold water or with an antiseptic mouth rinse. Store your mouthguard in a firm, perforated container.

### **Why does my child have chronic bad breath?**

Bad breath can be a sign of inflamed or infected tonsils or adenoids, chronic nasal congestion, tooth decay, or gum problems. Consult with your dentist or pediatrician.

### **What if my child has a tooth knocked out?**

Do not scrub or cleanse the tooth. Immediately place it in milk. If this is not available, wrap the tooth in a clean, wet paper towel or cloth and take it and your child to the dentist as quickly as possible. Many times, the tooth can be reimplanted into the tooth socket, given this quick-thinking attention.



# Making Healthy Smiles For GENERATIONS

*Crest Healthy Smiles  
2010 Program will help  
50 million kids.  
One Smile at a Time.*



The smiling faces in the guide belong to the kids of Procter & Gamble employees.

Please visit the Crest website at [www.cresthealthysmiles.com](http://www.cresthealthysmiles.com) for ongoing tips and information on dental care for your children and you. Or contact our consumer service representatives at 1-800-492-7378.



Crest has been shown to be an effective decay-preventive dentifrice that can be of significant value when used as directed in a conscientiously applied program of oral hygiene and regular professional care.  
Council on Scientific Affairs-American Dental Association

Dentist's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Practice \_\_\_\_\_

Office Location \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

