Your dentist is your partner for good oral health. See the dentist for regular cleanings and checkups starting at age one. Ask the county health department about programs if you cannot afford care. Putting off treatment costs more in the long run and can result in pain and infection.

Contact your county health department for dental resource options:

Public Health Dental Program
Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin #A14
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1724

Healthy teeth last a lifetime!
Fluoride as #1 for Preventing Tooth Decay.

Putting fluoride on tooth surfaces is the best protection from decay.

Drinking fluoridated water throughout the day protects teeth and even reverses beginning tooth decay in children and adults. It is the least expensive way to prevent tooth decay. The health department or water utility company can tell you if the fluoride level of its water is at the best level to prevent tooth decay. Bottled water usually does not provide the same decay prevention since most bottled water does not contain fluoride.

Brushing with fluoride toothpaste twice a day helps prevent tooth decay. Be sure that young children use only a pea-size amount of toothpaste and do not swallow it.

Using an over-the-counter fluoride mouthrinse is another way to put fluoride on teeth regularly. Weekly fluoride mouthrinse for children is available at some schools where fluoride levels of drinking water are not high enough to prevent decay. Check with your child’s school to see if a fluoride mouthrinse program is available. Dentists also provide fluoride treatments during regular visits.

Sealants shield teeth from decay

Sealants are plastic coatings that are applied when you visit the dentist. They keep decay out of the deep grooves in your teeth where fluoride can’t reach.

Most decay happens in the deep grooves of the permanent 6 and 12-year molars. Sealants can prevent most decay if placed on the permanent molars as soon as possible after they come in. Your dentist may recommend sealing more teeth for added benefit.

Children depend on adults to prevent decay

Young children who drink baby bottles or “sippy cups” of juice, milk, or sweetened beverages throughout the day develop decay of the front teeth called early childhood caries or baby bottle tooth decay.

To keep this from happening, limit children over the age of one to only water in bedtime and between-meal bottles and in “sippy cups.”

Weekly fluoride mouthrinse for children is available at some schools where fluoride levels of drinking water are not high enough to prevent decay. Check with your child’s school to see if a fluoride mouthrinse program is available. Dentists also provide fluoride treatments during regular visits.