



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.

healthy teeth last a lifetime!

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



take care of your teeth every day





fluorides sealants self-care dental visits

you have the power to stop tooth decay—

Tooth decay and gum disease are mainly caused by plaque, a coating of harmful, infectious germs that is constantly forming on the teeth. When foods or beverages containing sugars or starches are in the mouth, the germs in the plaque make an acid that destroys the surface of the teeth and causes decay. Both can be painful and costly.

Fluoride #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."

Clean your child's teeth and gums every day with a soft toothbrush or washcloth and a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste.

Make tooth care fun—with games and play—so that children learn to look forward to caring for their teeth.

Self-care & prevention—it's up to you

- Use toothpaste and/or mouthrinse containing fluoride.
- Brush teeth after breakfast and before bedtime to remove decay causing plaque build-up. Tooth surfaces should feel smooth—not "fuzzy."
- Brush your tongue and gums to remove plaque causing bacteria buildup.
- Floss teeth daily to clean areas your toothbrush can't reach.
- Using an over the counter mouthrinse proven to prevent gum disease may help maintain gum health.
- Remove tongue and lip jewelry that can chip and wear teeth.
- Chewing artificially sweetened gum after meals and snacks may help prevent decay and gum disease.
- Eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet that is rich in calcium and low in sugar. If you are pregnant, remember that your child's teeth are forming and need good nutrition to develop properly.
- PLEASE DON'T SMOKE! People who smoke have more gum disease than those that don't!
- Avoid smokeless tobacco. It causes dental disease and oral cancer by irritating gums and cheek linings with cancer causing chemicals. Spit tobacco is more addicting than cigarettes. Check with your doctor or health department about getting help to "quit spit."



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