



## ORAL HEALTH

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With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, FamilyVoices IMPACT works to develop ways to improve health and wellness for all children and families, and to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. [www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org) and [www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org). This digest is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration—Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Division of Child, Adolescent, and Family Health UCMC21535.

### Making Healthy Smiles is a Family Project!

Good oral health habits make healthy smiles! Those good oral health habits are not just good for teeth and gums, either. Scientists are learning the many ways that having a healthy mouth can improve overall health.

Many resources are available to help families develop good oral health habits. Here are a few tips to get you started.

#### Start Early!

Good oral health habits start early--even before the first tooth appears! For a series of helpful brochures on early oral habits, go to: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/odh/documents/downloadable-brochures/index.shtml>

#### The First Dentist Appointment

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentists (AAPD) now recommends making a dentist appointment for your baby when your baby is between 6 and 12 months of age to get an early start on healthy smiles. To find a pediatric dentist in your area, go to the website at [www.aapd.org](http://www.aapd.org) If you don't have a dentist near you, your baby's pediatrician can help guide you on oral health.

#### Brushing a Wiggly Toddler's Teeth

Brushing a toddler's teeth can be as challenging as changing a diaper on a

standing baby! Here's a video that shows ways you can hold your child securely to get the job done: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLLVMXjiHE4>

#### Just Say No to Sports Drinks!

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says that sports and energy drinks "are not appropriate for children and adolescents and should never be consumed." In addition to being high in calories and/or caffeine, these drinks contain citric acid, which can erode tooth enamel. Water is generally all kids need. To read the AAP report, go to: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2011/05/25/peds.2011-0965.full.pdf>

#### How Old is YOUR Toothbrush?

The British Dental Health Foundation recommends a new toothbrush every 3 months. Old toothbrushes are breeding grounds for germs and bacteria! Read more here: <http://worldental.org/oral-hygiene/toothbrushes-severe-health-risk-warns-dental-expert/4750/>

