



# HEALTH CHECK

## TOOTH TALK



Dental care is a part of your child's EqualityCare program. Your cooperation with the dentist is most important. A positive attitude toward your child's dental visit will help set favorable behavior patterns with your child.

Some dental offices will want you with your child during the treatment, while many others feel the child's behavior is better when you wait in the reception area.



A healthy mouth is more attractive, giving children confidence in their appearance.

### ESTABLISH GOOD HABITS EARLY

- ✓ Clean your infant's gums with a clean moist cloth after feeding.
- ✓ Start brushing the teeth as soon as they come into the mouth with a soft infant toothbrush and water.
- ✓ Do not use toothpaste until the child learns not to swallow
- ✓ Do not put your child to bed with a bottle that contains anything but water. Your toddler should not continuously drink from a bottle during the day. These two habits may cause Early Childhood Caries (tooth decay).
- ✓ Teach your child to drink from a cup between 12 and 14 months.

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#### Special points of interest:

- ☺ Healthy Habits
- ☺ Fluoride Treatments
- ☺ Important telephone numbers

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Good habits for healthy teeth start at an early age

# TOOTH DECAY: WHAT TO CHECK FOR

## Early Childhood Dental Caries



White spots along gum line;  
first sign of decay



Brown/black spots,  
abscess "Gum boil" under lip

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Cavities can be very painful to children and losing teeth because of decay can even cause growth and development delays, such as speech and self esteem problems. Just because kids lose their baby teeth, it is still very important to take care of them while they have them!

You can help keep your children's teeth healthy by:

- "Lifting their lip" to check for signs of decay (white spots or holes on the surface of the teeth);
- Limiting the constant use of your child's sippy cup, unless it contains water;
- Brushing their teeth after they have any drink with sugar (even breast milk and formula) and before they go to bed;
- Using a fluoride toothpaste and having a healthcare professional apply a "fluoride varnish" to your child's teeth; and
- Getting a dental exam by the time your child is two years old.

Nurses from *Healthy Together!* - a program offered by the Wyoming Department of Health to all Wyoming EqualityCare clients at no cost—can help you and your family understand the importance of avoiding tooth decay and can give you advice on keeping your entire family healthy. Call our toll-free number 24 hours a day to talk with a nurse.

### Early Childhood Tooth Decay

- A disease process which affects overall health
- A disease process which; is preventable, treatable and can be reversed.
- Bacteria in the mouth and high amounts of sugar in the child's diet cause tooth decay.

Severe  
Early  
Childhood  
Caries



### Prevention

- **Clean** the infant's mouth with a clean cloth after feeding.
- Brush baby's teeth as soon as they come into the mouth.
- Never put baby to bed with a bottle. If necessary put only water in the bottle at bedtime.
- Wean the baby from the bottle by age 1.
- Child's first visit to the dentist should be around the 1<sup>st</sup> birthday.
- Reduce and restrict the amounts and number of times the child has sugary foods.
- Give your child healthy snacks, low in sugar.
- Check with your dentist or physician concerning fluoride supplements or topical fluoride applications.
- Ask your dentists about dental sealants.
- Set a good example for your child by taking care of your teeth.

## TOOTH BRUSHING

Children need to brush their teeth at least two times a day. Toothbrushes should be the proper size (smaller is better than bigger) and always use a soft nylon brush in a circular manner. Toothbrushes should be replaced when they are worn or after more serious colds, infection, Strep throat, etc. Following are some guidelines for brushing your children's teeth:

- **Infants**—teeth should be wiped off with a gauze or washcloth
- **Toddlers**—parents should brush their teeth twice a day with a very small amount of toothpaste. They should be encouraged to take some responsibility and "help" brush.
- **3-6 year olds**—let them brush, supervise them, and do the final brushing to make sure all surfaces of the teeth are cleaned. Also you need to floss their teeth as they get older as the teeth get closer and tighter over time. Make sure they can rinse their mouth so toothpaste doesn't get swallowed.
- **6 and older**—continue supervision until you are sure they can brush and floss properly.

In general, make brushing fun and a game for young children.



## PREVENTIVE DENTISTRY

### Why is preventive dentistry important and when should you start?

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, preventive dentistry means a healthy smile for your child. Children with healthy mouths chew more easily and gain more nutrients from the foods they eat. They learn to speak more quickly and clearly. They have a better chance of general health, because disease in the mouth can endanger the rest of the body. A healthy mouth is more attractive, giving children confidence in their appearance. Preventive dentistry should begin with the first tooth. Visit your pediatric dentist when the first tooth comes in. You will learn how to protect your infant's dental health. The earlier the dental visit, the better the chance of preventing dental disease and helping your child belong to the cavity-free generation.

### Preventive dentistry for children includes:

brushing - dental development - flossing - fluorides - oral habits - orthodontics - parent involvement - proper diet - sealants - sports safety

## FLUORIDE TREATMENTS, DENTAL SEALANTS AND REGULAR CHECK-UPS



- Fluoride strengthens the teeth and helps prevent tooth decay. Your dentist may prescribe fluoride supplements for your child, if your drinking water does not have enough fluoride. Your child may also receive fluoride treatments during their regular check up.
- Dental sealants protect the chewing surfaces of the back teeth from tooth decay. When your child's first permanent molars start coming in, ask your dentist about dental sealants.
- Your child should visit the dentist every six months for a check up.

## WHO SHOULD I CALL?



- If you have any questions on your EqualityCare benefits please contact ACS at 1-800-251-1269.
  - For Children's Special Health (CSH) eligibility, call your local Public Health Nursing (PHN) office. For information on services and limitations for the CSH programs, call (307) 777-7941, or 1-800-438-5795.
  - To apply for assistance in purchasing nutritional food items (I.e. formula, juice, milk, eggs, etc.) through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, contact your local WIC office.
  - If you have questions about you or your family's health and would like to talk with a nurse, call *Healthy Together!* toll-free, 24 hours a day at 1-888-545-1710.
- \* For children enrolled in Kid Care CHIP:**
- If you have any questions on your Kid Care CHIP health or vision benefits, please contact Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming at 1-800-209-9720.
  - If you have any questions on your Kid Care CHIP dental benefits, please contact Delta Dental at 1-800-735-3379.

**\* Kid Care CHIP is not an EqualityCare Program**



# YOUR HEALTH CHECK NEWSLETTER

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We envision a Wyoming in which all citizens are able to achieve their maximum health potential; a Wyoming in which early intervention, well-ness, health promotion, and health maintenance programs are the primary approach for solving health problems; a Wyoming in which all citizens have regular access to basic health care; a Wyoming in which at-risk citizens receive culturally appropriate and sensitive services; a Wyoming in which we and future generations are healthy, vital, and productive so as to seize the opportunity to live our individual dreams and enjoy the benefits of our bountiful resources and natural beauty.

## Mission

The Wyoming Department of Health is the primary State agency for providing health and human services. It administers programs maintaining the health and safety of all citizens of Wyoming.

Wyoming  
Department of Health  
Office of Healthcare Financing  
Our mission is to promote, protect and enhance the health of all Wyoming citizens.

