



SCHOOL HEALTH

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WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW THE DENTIST?

February was National Children's Dental Health month. The American Dental Association held the first national observance of Children's Dental Health Day on February 8, 1949. This single day observance became a week-long event in 1955. In 1981, the program was extended to a month-long celebration known today as National Children's Dental Health Month.

Children should know that the dentist is a friendly doctor who will help them take care of their teeth. Be positive and try to make dental visits an enjoyable experience for your child. Set a good example by brushing your own teeth twice a day, using floss or an interdental cleaner between your teeth once a day and visiting your dentist regularly. Attitudes and habits established at an early age are critical in helping your child maintain good oral health throughout life.

The ADA recommends parents take children to the dentist by the child's first birthday. The primary (baby) teeth are very important for chewing, speaking, and appearance. They also help hold the space in the jaws for the permanent teeth. One serious form of tooth decay among young children is early childhood decay (sometimes called baby bottle tooth decay). This condition is caused by frequent and long exposures of an infant's teeth to liquids that contain sugar, such as milk (including breast milk), formula, fruit juice and other sweetened drinks. Parents should never give a baby a bottle at naptime or bedtime, and shouldn't use a bottle (with anything other than water) as a pacifier for a fussy baby.

Begin brushing your child's teeth with a little water as soon as the first tooth appears. If you are considering

using toothpaste before age two, ask your dentist or physician first.

Parents need to supervise tooth brushing to make sure children over age two use only a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste and avoid swallowing the toothpaste. Children should be taught to spit out remaining toothpaste and rinse with water after brushing. Most children will be able to brush on their own by age six or seven. Parents should be using floss or an interdental cleaner on their child's teeth as soon as any two teeth touch. Cleaning between the teeth is important because it removes plaque where a toothbrush can't reach. Brush your child's teeth twice a day unless your dentist recommends otherwise.

I realize a dental visit can be expensive if you don't have insurance, but there are options. UVSC has a Dental Hygiene Clinic where Dental Hygiene students, under the direct supervision of a dentist can offer quality services at a reduced rate.

- ✦ \$10/children under 10 years
- ✦ \$15/children 10-16 years
- ✦ \$13/students
- ✦ \$25-\$35/adult non-students

Prices include a complete dental cleaning, 4 x-rays, dental exam, & fluoride treatment. You must call for an appointment 863-7608.

(Excerpts taken from www.ADA.org)