

ORAL HYGIENE

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Proper tooth brushing, flossing, and choosing the right foods are all part of keeping teeth and bodies healthy! Strong, healthy teeth help us chew nutritious foods. Encouraging proper brushing, flossing, and a mouth-healthy diet will help your child establish a proper oral hygiene routine that will benefit them for their whole life!

A SMILE AS BRIGHT AS YOUR FUTURE:

- **Brush Twice a Day** - the most important habit for your child's teeth is making sure that they brush them regularly and properly. Your child should brush their teeth twice a day for two minutes, using back and forth and up and down motions. Don't forget to encourage them to brush their tongue and gums to eliminate bacteria that can linger
- **Floss Once a Day** - It's best to floss before bedtime so your child can remove any food particles that may have gotten caught in their teeth. If your child finds using traditional floss difficult, there are lots of fun tools like floss picks that can make it easier
- **Get Regular Cleanings** - Your child should see their dentist every 6 months for a routine cleaning and checkup. Regular cleanings will help remove any plaque buildup that can lead to problems like cavities.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR:

- **Avoid Sticky, Starchy, Sugary Foods** - When sugar gets on the teeth, it serves as a food source for bacteria. The bacteria convert the sugar into acids, which then leads to tooth decay and cavities. Sticky, sugar candies are notoriously bad for the teeth since they stubbornly stay on the teeth after eating. The longer sugar remains on the surface of the teeth, the more bacteria can grow. Starchy snacks like potato chips and crackers that are made from refined carbohydrates get broken down into simple sugars when chewed. As they soften in the mouth, they can easily stick into the crevices of your child's teeth, providing food for bacteria
- **Skip Fruit Juice and Soda** - Fruit juices seem like a healthier alternative to soda, but they can still be harmful to your child's teeth. Most fruit juices are loaded with added sugar, often just as much as soda. This sugar will coat your child's teeth and provide a breeding ground for harmful bacteria. Additionally, fruit loses a lot of its nutritional factors when it's turned into juice, so your child is missing out on the benefits of fresh fruit. Soda is even worse than fruit juice because, in addition to sugar, it is also highly acidic due to the citric and phosphoric acids used to provide carbonation. Highly acidic things like soda can wear down the enamel on the teeth, which can lead to cavities and tooth decay. encourage your child to drink water whenever possible



Some oral hygiene must-haves include a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, and a mouthwash!



BHC INSTAGRAM



BHCWSU.ORG



BHC TWITTER