

stDental Times

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Cavities: The Most Preventable Childhood Disease

February is National Children’s Dental Health Month (NCDHM), a month-long celebration sponsored by the American Dental Association to promote dental education and awareness of all children. The annual celebration focuses on oral hygiene care, nutritional concerns, prevention, and the importance of regular dental visits.



Free Screening for children will be held on Monday, February 27th. Please call (408) 782-6568 for an appointment

In observation of NCDHM, Santa Teresa Dental Clinic is offering free screenings for children on Monday, February 27th. In addition, a demonstration on how to properly care for teeth will be given. A free toothbrush, floss, toothpaste, as well as a toy will be given. Please call (408) 782-6568 for an appointment.

“Cavities may still be the single most common childhood disease,”

said Dr. Andrew Huang. “But the good news is parents can easily play a pivotal role in preventing them.”

Acid-forming bacteria found in dental plaque causes cavities. Children, ages 1 through 6, are more susceptible to cavities because baby teeth have thinner and weaker enamel. Baby teeth also have more spaces in between where food is more likely to linger. Consequently, it creates a breeding ground for cavity-causing bacteria.

Learning about proper oral care should be just as important as prenatal care. Parents should take the initiative and ask health care professionals about a child’s oral health.

Dr. Huang offers the following tips for a young, healthy smile.

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How Can You Brighten Your Smile?

Your wedding is coming up or you may be going to a special occasion. You want your smile to be its brightest. “White, bright teeth certainly help maintain a youthful appearance,” says Dr. Andrew Huang. And the easiest way to brighten your smile is teeth bleaching. Teeth bleaching isn’t for just movie stars anymore.

Among you and I, the desire for a brighter smile with whiter teeth is very strong, and teeth bleaching **safely** lightens the color of the teeth.

As the tooth enamel develops, the color can be affected by many factors. Unfortunately, stains from food and drink can darken teeth over time, usually resulting in a yellow or orange hue.

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Cavities

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- **Start cleaning teeth early.** As the first tooth appears, clean and massage the gums with a moistened gauze square or washcloth once a day to help establish healthy teeth and to aid in teething. When more teeth come in, switch to a small, soft toothbrush.
- **Use fluoride appropriately.** Fluoride, found in toothpaste, fluoridated water and by professional application, is important in fighting cavities. But if children younger than 6 years old swallow too much fluoride, their teeth may develop white spots. To keep this from happening, use only a small amount of toothpaste (about the size of a pea). Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste and to rinse well after brushing. Consult with your pediatrician or dentist about when to start using fluoride.
- **Eat a healthy, balanced diet and limit sugar intake.** Offer your children fruits and vegetables and avoid foods with processed sugars. In addition, limit sugary and carbonated drinks. Use a straw with drinks to prevent sugar contact with teeth. Buy sugar-free chewing gum that contains xylitol or sorbitol, which are proven to reduce the incidence of cavities.
- **Prevent baby bottle tooth decay.** Never allow children to fall asleep with a bottle containing sugary liquids, including milk, formula, fruit juice, sodas, and other sweetened drinks. The sugary liquids pool around the teeth and gums, feeding the bacteria that cause cavities.
- **Be a role model.** Parents can teach kids good dental care by being a role model. Let them watch you brush and floss your teeth, then take time to show them how to do it themselves.
- **Visit a dentist.** Children should visit a dentist within six months of the first tooth and no later than 12 months of age. During the first visit parents will learn more about the proper oral care and hygiene measures necessary for young, healthy teeth.

“With a little patience and guidance, your children can grow up with a healthy, beautiful smile,” said Dr. Huang.



Your child's first dental visit should be between ages of six months and one year.

“Learning about proper oral care should be just as important as pre-natal care,” said Dr. Andrew Huang.

Brush Up on Healthy Teeth: Take This Healthy Smile Quiz

Learn more about keeping your child's teeth healthy with this true or false quiz.

1. **T or F** All children older than 6 months should receive a fluoride supplement every day.
2. **T or F** Parents should start cleaning their child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears.
3. **T or F** Parents should start brushing their child's teeth with toothpaste that contains fluoride at age 3.
4. **T or F** Children younger than 6 years should use enough toothpaste with fluoride to cover the toothbrush.
5. **T or F** Parents should brush their child's teeth twice a day until the child can handle the toothbrush alone.
6. **T or F** Young children should always use fluoride mouth rinses after brushing.

For Answers for this Healthy Smile Quiz: See **Answers**, Page 3

Answers

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1. **False.** Parents of a child older than 6 months should discuss with your child’s doctor or dentist about your child’s specific fluoride needs.
2. **True.** Start cleaning as soon as the first tooth appears. Wipe teeth every day with a clean, damp cloth. Switch to a small, soft toothbrush as more teeth come in.
3. **False.** Parents should start using toothpaste with fluoride to brush their child’s teeth at age 2. Toothpaste with fluoride may be used earlier if the child’s doctor or dentist recommends it.
4. **False.** Young children should use only a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
5. **True.** Children usually do not have the skill to brush their teeth well until around age 4 or 5. Parents should brush their young child’s teeth thoroughly twice a day until the child can handle the toothbrush alone.
6. **False.** Fluoride mouth rinses have a high concentration of fluoride. Children younger than 6 years should not use fluoride mouth rinses unless the child’s doctor or dentist recommends it.

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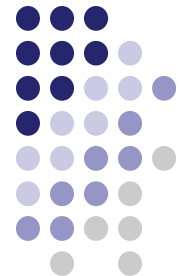
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*Stop by the office to purchase a gift certificate or pick up products today!

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Questions you want us to answer in the next newsletter? Write or Email us!



Dr. Ann Lien & Dr. Andrew Huang of Santa Teresa Dental, "Your referral is the best compliment. We couldn't have grown without your support."

The mission of **Santa Teresa Dental Clinic** is to provide quality and affordable family dentistry.

Mission Statement:

Santa Teresa Dental will bring quality dentistry at an affordable price to the community. We will focus on one patient at a time. All patients are treated like family. Patients will be seen in a timely manner. Patient comfort and satisfaction are our priorities. Our goal is to educate patients regarding the importance of oral health and regular dental check-ups. We will serve not only one satisfied patient, but one satisfied family, then finally one satisfied community.

Bleaching

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Illness, heredity or environmental factors can also discolor the tooth.

Maternal use of certain antibiotics, notably those of the tetracycline family, during pregnancy can cause brown or gray discoloration of the baby's tooth. Children who take this medication during the period of permanent tooth development may have similar discoloration of the permanent teeth.

Teeth whiteners may not correct all types of discoloration. Yellow-ish hues teeth will probably bleach well, brownish-colored teeth may bleach less well, and grayish-hued teeth may not bleach well at all. Likewise, bleaching may not enhance your smile if you have had

bonding or tooth-colored fillings placed in your front teeth. The whitener will not affect the color of these materials.

Generally, teeth bleaching is successfully in at least 90 percent of patients, though it may not be an option for everyone. Contact us today to obtain the proper diagnosis and discuss all options available.