

# Cavity Prevention

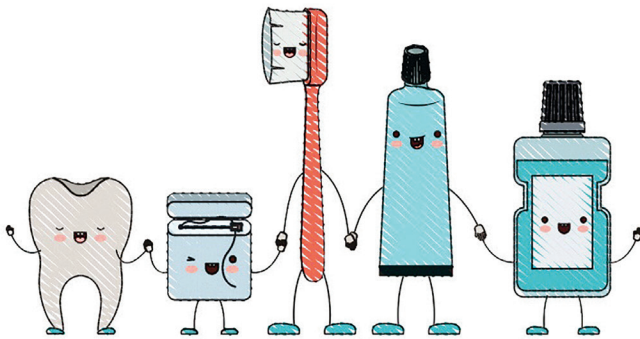
We want all smiles to last a lifetime! We encourage proper dental-care habits in children, and we enjoy teaching them how to keep their teeth healthy for a lifetime. Below are some guidelines to help prevent cavities.

## Brushing (Toothpaste):

Everyone should brush their teeth 2 to 3 times a day with a soft, gentle, circular motion. Brush every tooth, and don't forget the tongue. Bacteria on the tongue can cause bad breath. If you are at very high risk for cavities, your dentist may recommend highly concentrated fluoride toothpaste.

## Flossing:

If you don't floss at least once a day, you're missing about a third of the surfaces of your teeth that your toothbrush can't reach. Flossing helps prevent decay between teeth, and it should start as soon as possible for young children. The most important time to floss is right before bedtime.



## Mouth Rinses:

Antibacterial, fluoridated mouth rinses such as Listerine, Oral B, or Crest keep the bacteria in your mouth low. Use a mouth rinse at least once a day, preferably right before bed (after brushing and flossing).

## Dry Mouth:

Dry mouth, often caused by certain medical conditions or medications, increases risk of tooth decay. Some of the special products that can help reduce that risk are Biotene toothpaste, salivary substitutes, and mouth rinses. Children who are mouth breathers while sleeping are also at increased risk, because the mouth dries out. Be extra diligent about their oral hygiene and use products that can help prevent cavities.

## Fluoride:

- A. Fluoride is an essential mineral that helps to keep teeth resistant to decay. Topical fluoride is found in most toothpastes. Brush 2 to 3 times per day with a fluoride toothpaste, but do not swallow it. For children who can't spit well (including children under 3), we recommend a xylitol-based toothpaste or a training toothpaste with water instead.
- B. Systemic fluoride is also important for the health of your teeth. This is the fluoride added to tap water, and you and your child should drink some every day. Check the label of your bottled water to see if it contains fluoride. If you have well water at home, you can take a sample to the Brant County Health Department to be checked for fluoride content. Be aware that if your water system uses reverse osmosis, the fluoride is removed.

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## Regular Dental Visits and Checkups:

To make sure tooth decay doesn't set in, everyone should see their dentist every six to nine months for a cleaning and examination. Even people with no teeth should be seen for an oral health exam and cancer screening.

## Radiographs:

Modern digital x-rays offer greatly reduced radiation exposure and they help diagnose cavities between teeth, often when they are small and easy to take care of. That's much better than dealing with a painful dental emergency in the future.



## Deep Grooves and Pits:

No matter how diligent your child is with their brushing and flossing, if their back teeth have really deep grooves and pits, they may not be able to keep them as clean as they should be. To reduce the likelihood of decay, your dentist may recommend sealants. These fill in the deep grooves, protecting the enamel and making the teeth easier to keep clean.

## Nutrition and Snacks:

To prevent cavities, you want to limit your mouth's exposure to sugary and sticky substances. Raisins, crackers, goldfish, granola bars, real fruit snacks, and dried fruits get stuck in the grooves of your teeth, which increases the risk of a cavity. Surprisingly, how often you snack is more important than how much you eat when you snack. Fruit juices for children should be limited to only 4 to 6 oz. per day, and we recommend they don't drink it during school hours, too many hours from nighttime brushing. It's also best to put only water in sippy cups. The restricted flow increases how long the liquid is in the mouth, bathing the teeth in the sugary liquid.



## Other Helpful Tips:

- A. Xylitol gum has been proven to be very helpful in the quest for great oral health. SPRY gum is a high-xylitol gum that, if chewed often during the day, can stimulate saliva to rinse teeth and buffer acid produced by bacteria. Also, bacteria can't use the xylitol to produce by-products.
- B. Water helps rinse the teeth and is the only known liquid that doesn't cause cavities, so drink lots of water during the day.

If you have any questions, please call 519.756.8080 or visit our website [www.clarencestreetdental.com](http://www.clarencestreetdental.com).