



# School-Based Health Center Health Note

## Oral Health



Did you know that an estimated 51 million school hours per year are lost because of dental-related illness? Tooth pain keeps many children home from school or distracts them from learning.

In the rush to get ready for school, most kids don't spend enough time brushing their teeth. Poor dental hygiene can lead to tooth decay, the #1 most common chronic childhood disease. Tooth decay is 5 times more common than asthma and 7 times more common than hay fever... but it is preventable!!

**Good oral health in children means healthy teeth as an adult. Here's how to help care for your child's pearly white teeth:**

- Take your child to a pediatric dentist by the child's first birthday or when the first teeth arrive, whichever comes first.
- Begin helping your child floss by the time his or her last two molars come together, which usually happens when children are 2 1/2 to 3 years of age.
- Don't let children brush their own teeth until around the ages of 7 to 9 — or until they're able to tie their shoes or cut meat on their plates.
- Take care of your own oral health. Research shows that the bacteria that cause decay can be passed from caregivers to infants and young children. Rinsing with anti-bacterial mouthwashes has been shown to significantly reduce the number of cavity-causing bacteria.
- Let your child choose his or her own toothbrush as long as it's the proper size and soft bristled. Replace a toothbrush when it's worn or after an illness. Never share a toothbrush.
- Pack a nutritious lunch & snack. Fresh fruit, vegetables, and cheese are great choices. Cheese, like aged Cheddar, Swiss, and Monterey Jack, is especially good for teeth because it neutralizes acids. Avoid fruit juices and sodas because they are very acidic and erode tooth enamel. Also avoid foods that are sticky or chewy because they will cling to the tooth surface, allowing the bacteria in plaque to produce more acid.
- Floss picks make flossing easier for kids and come in fun flavors. Find one that they like and the battle is almost won! If you can't get your kids to floss twice a day, make sure they floss before going to bed.



**Overall, healthy teeth and gums will play a significant role in keeping the rest of your child's body healthy. And a sparkling smile always helps them look and feel their best!**

**Indian Hill Elementary**  
 3121 U Street  
 402-933-4968

**Spring Lake Magnet Elementary**  
 4215 S. 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
 402-932-7014

**Liberty Elementary**  
 2021 St. Mary's Ave.  
 402-505-8180



We look forward to seeing your family!

**King Science Magnet**  
 3720 Florence Blvd.  
 402-502-5644

**Belvedere Elementary**  
 3775 Curtis Ave.  
 402-932-1232

**Northwest High School**  
 8204 Crown Point Ave.  
 402-916-5964

**Kellom Elementary**  
 1311 N. 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
 402-505-5451

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