



# HEALTH CHECK

## TOOTH TALK

WYOMING OFFICE OF  
MEDICAID

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Good habits for healthy teeth  
start at an early age

Dental care is a part of your child's EqualityCare program. Your cooperation with the dentist is most important. A positive attitude toward your child's dental visit will help set favorable behavior patterns with your child.

Some dental offices will want you with your child during the treatment, while many others feel the child's behavior is better when you wait in the reception area.



### Special points of interest:

- ☺ Healthy Habits
- ☺ Fluoride Treatments
- ☺ Important telephone numbers

### Inside this issue:

Tooth Brushing	2
Preventive Dentistry	2
Fluoride Treatments, Dental Sealants...	2
Who Should I Call?	2
Dept. of Health	3
Your Newsletter	3

### ESTABLISH GOOD HABITS EARLY

- ✓ Clean your infant's gums with a clean moist cloth after feeding.
- ✓ Start brushing the teeth as soon as they come into the mouth with a soft infant toothbrush and water.
- ✓ Do not use toothpaste until the child learns not to swallow
- ✓ Do not put your child to bed with a bottle that contains anything but water. Your toddler should not continuously drink from a bottle during the day. These two habits may cause Early Childhood Caries (tooth decay).
- ✓ Teach your child to drink from a cup between 12 and 14 months.



# TOOTH DECAY: WHAT TO CHECK FOR

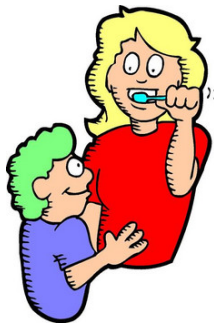
## TOOTH DECAY (cavities)



White spots along gum line; first sign of decay



Brown/black spots, abscess "Gum boil" under lip



### Check For:

- Chalky white spots - first signs of decay
- Brown or Black spots on teeth
- Broken teeth with changes in color
- Sensitivity or pain to hot, cold, or sweets
- "Gum boils" above the tooth under the lip
- Unexplained "bad breath"



### Early Childhood Tooth Decay

- A disease process which affects overall health
- A disease process which; is preventable, treatable and can be reversed.
- Bacteria in the mouth and high amounts of sugar in the child's diet cause tooth decay.

### Severe Early Childhood Caries



### Prevention

- **Clean** the infant's mouth with a clean cloth after feeding.
- Brush baby's teeth as soon as they come into the mouth.
- Never put baby to bed with a bottle. If necessary put only water in the bottle at bedtime.
- Wean the baby from the bottle by age 1.
- Child's first visit to the dentist should be around

the 1<sup>st</sup> birthday.

- Reduce and restrict the amounts and number of times the child has sugary foods.
- Give your child healthy snacks, low in sugar.
- Check with your dentist or physician concerning fluoride supplements or topical fluoride applications.
- Ask your dentists about dental sealants.
- Set a good example for your child by taking care of your teeth.

## TOOTH BRUSHING

Children need to brush their teeth at least two times a day. Toothbrushes should be the proper size (smaller is better than bigger) and always use a soft nylon brush in a circular manner. Toothbrushes should be replaced when they are worn or after more serious colds, infection, Strep throat, etc. Following are some guidelines for brushing your children's teeth:

- **Infants**—teeth should be wiped off with a gauze or wash-cloth
- **Toddlers**—parents should brush their teeth twice a day with a very small amount of toothpaste. They should be encouraged to take some responsibility and "help" brush.
- **3-6 year olds**—let them brush, supervise them, and do the final brushing to make sure all surfaces of the teeth are cleaned. Also you need to floss their teeth as they get older as the teeth get closer and tighter over time. Make sure they can rinse their mouth so toothpaste doesn't get swallowed.
- **6 and older**—continue supervision until you are sure they can brush and floss properly.

**In general, make brushing fun and a game for young children.**

## PREVENTIVE DENTISTRY

**Why is preventive dentistry important and when should start?**

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, preventive dentistry means a healthy smile for your child. Children with healthy mouths chew more easily and gain more nutrients from the foods they eat. They learn to speak more quickly and clearly. They have a better chance of general health, because disease in the mouth can endanger the rest of the body. A healthy mouth is more attractive, giving children confidence in their appearance. Preventive dentistry should begin with the first tooth. Visit your pediatric dentist when the first tooth comes in. You will learn how to protect your infant's dental health. The earlier the dental visit, the better the chance of preventing dental disease and helping your child belong to the cavity-free generation.

**Preventive dentistry for children includes:**

brushing - dental development - flossing - fluorides - oral habits - orthodontics - parent involvement - proper diet -

## FLUORIDE TREATMENTS, DENTAL SEALANTS AND REGULAR CHECK-UPS



- Fluoride strengthens the teeth and helps prevent tooth decay. Your dentist may prescribe fluoride supplements for your child, if your drinking water does not have enough fluoride. Your child may also receive fluoride treatments during their regular check up.
- Dental sealants protect the chewing surfaces of the back teeth from tooth decay. When your child's first permanent molars start coming in, ask your dentist about dental sealants.

## WHO SHOULD I CALL?



- If you have any questions on your EqualityCare benefits please contact ACS at 1-800-251-1269.
- For Children's Special Health (CSH) eligibility, call your local Public Health Nursing (PHN) office. For information on services and limitations for the CSH programs, call (307) 777-7941, or 1-800-438-5795.
- To apply for assistance in purchasing nutritional food items (I.e. formula, juice, milk, eggs, etc.) through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, contact your local WIC office.

**\* For children enrolled in Kid Care CHIP:**

- If you have any questions on your Kid Care CHIP health or vision benefits, please contact Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming at 1-800-209-9720.
- If you have any questions on your Kid Care CHIP dental benefits, please contact Delta Dental at 1-800-735-3379.



# YOUR HEALTH CHECK NEWSLETTER

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Our mission is to promote,  
protect and enhance the  
health of all Wyoming  
citizens.

The Wyoming Department of Health is the primary State agency for providing health and human services. It administers programs maintaining the health and safety of all citizens of Wyoming.

## **Mission**

We envision a Wyoming in which all citizens are able to achieve their maximum health potential; a Wyoming in which early intervention, wellness, health promotion, and health maintenance programs are the primary approach for solving health problems; a Wyoming in which all citizens have regular access to basic health care; a Wyoming in which at-risk citizens receive culturally appropriate and sensitive services; a Wyoming in which we and future generations are healthy, vital, and productive so as to seize the opportunity to live our individual dreams and enjoy the benefits of our bountiful resources and natural beauty.