

# Keeping Kids' Eyes, Ears, and Teeth Healthy!



## HEALTHY TEETH



### Why should teeth stay healthy?

- Tooth decay or cavities are a common problem in the US.
- Children who have cavities are at a higher risk for getting more cavities.
- Tooth decay is painful. It will affect how your child eats, speaks and learns.



**Students with dental pain may have trouble:**

- Staying on track in school
- Having confidence or high self-esteem
- Making friends
- Focusing in class

### When should children see the dentist?

- Starting at age 1, all children should have their teeth cleaned at the dentist at least

## EVERY SIX MONTHS

- Even though they will lose their primary teeth, tooth decay on these teeth can cause problems with speaking, eating, and affect the formation and healthy of their adult teeth.

### Where can I find a dentist?

- **School:** Ask your child's teacher or school nurse if dental screenings happen at your child's school!
- **Community:** Talk to other parents who take their kids to the dentist.
- **Doctor:** If you are having trouble finding a dentist, sometimes your doctor or pediatrician can provide fluoride treatments. While a full dental cleaning is preferred, fluoride can protect kids teeth and can be a good alternative if there is no dentist in the area.



### Visit the dentist right away if children:

- Say their tooth or face hurts
- Say it hurts when they eat or drink
- Are sensitive to really hot or cold food and drink
- Have holes in their teeth
- Have brown, black, or white stains on a tooth

If you see tooth decay, get it evaluated by a dentist even if your child says it does not hurt. Dental screenings help identify cavities that your child is not complaining about.

### What can I do at home?

- **Encourage brushing:** all children should brush their teeth for **2 minutes, 2 times a day**
- Use toothpaste with fluoride
- Floss once a day

#### Under Age 3

Use only a small "smear" of toothpaste because they won't be able to spit.

#### Ages 3 to 6

Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.



### Begin brushing as soon as teeth come out of the gums!

When you start brushing your child's teeth, you can use a soft brush or a clean cloth with water on it 1-2 times per day.



### As kids get older, encourage them to brush their own teeth!

To start, have them brush first and then you brush for 2 more minutes to make sure they did a good job.