



MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your public health team, connecting with our communities to achieve healthier outcomes

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Back-to-school tips for keeping your child's smile healthy

Stanton- According to the Michigan Dental Association, children in the U.S. lose 51 million school hours each year due to dental pain. Make sure your child isn't one of them with these tips:

1. Get a dental checkup

Get your child off to a great start to the school year with a visit to the dentist! Your child's dentist will do a thorough exam, probably take X-rays, perform a thorough cleaning, and make recommendations on any needed treatment, such as filling cavities, extraction of wisdom teeth, or extraction of baby teeth that are not falling out fast enough. Your dentist may also recommend preventive measures such as fluoride treatments or the placement of sealants. Your dentist can answer questions you may have and provide your child with instruction on how to best take care of his or her smile.

2. Pack healthy school snacks

Diet plays an important role in all parts of health and, of course, everything you eat goes past your teeth. Eating healthy snacks can help feed your child's brain better, too! Health snack ideas include: celery and flavored cream cheese, fresh fruit, carrot sticks and ranch dip, tortilla wraps (cream cheese with sliced turkey), cottage cheese, yogurt (try drinkable yogurt or freeze tube yogurts), crackers and cheese, and pretzels.

3. Limit pop consumption

While recent studies show that consumption of pop and sugary drinks are down overall, these same studies show that more than 60 percent of high school students consume sugar-sweetened beverages every day. Children should be educated on the health risks associated with regular consumption of soda pop, sports drinks, and other sugar-sweetened beverages — risks such as diabetes and obesity. Soda pop, sports drinks and energy drinks, also contain high levels of acid that erode the enamel on teeth. Provide plenty of access to healthy options such as milk, water and 100 percent fruit juices.

4. Wear a mouth guard

Talk with your dentist about the right mouth guard for your child's sports. A properly fitted mouth guard can prevent serious and sometimes irreparable injury to the teeth, gums and jaw. Your child should wear a mouth guard while playing any contact sport or activities where falls are common. There are many different types of guards and options to fit every budget.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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