



National  
Association of  
School Nurses



## Oral Health Guidance for Parents of Young Children

### Take your child to the dentist

- Your child's first dental appointment should be within six months of the first primary tooth.

***First dental appointment should be no later than their first birthday!***

### Protect children's teeth with fluoride

- Check with your doctor, nurse practitioner or dentist to find out if the drinking water in your area is fluoridated. If it's not, ask them how to protect your child's teeth
- Use fluoride toothpaste. This can be introduced at age 2. If your child is less than 7 years old, use only a pea-size amount of toothpaste on their toothbrush and help them brush their teeth.

***Children can brush teeth without parental help once they master tying their own shoelaces!***

### Limit sweet foods and drinks

- Encourage your child to eat healthy meals
- Avoid frequent snacking between meals
- Limit sweet foods and drinks that can lead to tooth decay
  - ◆ Limit fruit juice due to high sugar content

***Water is a great thing for your children to drink!***

### Dental sealants

- Talk to your child's dentist about dental sealants, they are recommended for all children
- They protect the chewing surfaces of the tooth - last as long as 5-10 years
- It's best if it's applied soon after teeth have erupted

***Dental sealants protect teeth from decay!***

### Keeps mouths clean

- Bacteria that can harm teeth can be spread by:
  - ◆ Sharing forks, knives and spoons
  - ◆ Cleaning pacifiers and bottle nipples in the parent's mouth

***Everyone should have their own toothbrush!***

References: Casamassimo & Holt, 2004; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; Truman, et al., 2002; ADA Center for Evidence based Dentistry, 2011; American Dental Association, 2011

