

FEBRUARY IS CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

February 10, 2020 – Tooth decay (cavities) is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood in the United States. Untreated tooth decay in children can cause pain and infection that may lead to problems eating, speaking, playing and learning later in life.

February is Children's Dental Health Month and District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) would like to remind people about the importance of oral health. Below are seven simple ways to protect and keep children's teeth healthy.

1. Regularly visit the Dentist:

- A child's first dental visit should be scheduled as soon as the first tooth comes through the gums, but also no later than age one.
- After the first visit, appointments should be scheduled for every six months.

2. Brush their teeth:

- Begin using fluoride toothpaste as soon as teeth begin breaking through the gums.
- Children should be brushing their teeth for 2 minutes, 2 times each day.

3. Floss too:

- Just like for adults, a toothbrush doesn't fit in between the teeth to remove germs, so flossing between teeth once each day is just as important as brushing.

4. Limit sugary items:

- Try to limit sugary snacking and drinking between meals. If a snack must be had, ensure it's nutritious.
- If consuming sugary foods and drinks consume them with meals. Saliva production increases during meals and helps neutralize acid production and rinse food particles from the mouth.
 - The acid in sugary beverages will eat away at the tooth enamel for 20 minutes after every drink leading to cavities if left untreated.

5. Don't share:

- Sharing cups, straws, utensils or toothbrushes can and will transfer germs that cause cavities.

6. Ask the dentist about sealants:

- Sealants can protect the chewing surface of a child's teeth.

7. Use mouthguards when necessary:

- As children age and begin playing contact sports, take into consideration using a custom mouthguard to protect from head, neck and teeth injuries. Adult teeth are the only set of teeth you'll get.

Questions? Contact your local dental health provider. If you do not have one, visit whereforcare.info/#findaprovider to locate a provider near you.

About DHD #10

District Health Department #10 (DHD #10) is Michigan's largest geographical health department, mandated to promote and protect the public from unsafe and hazardous conditions and provide methods of promoting good health and disease prevention. Some of the vital programs provided by DHD #10 include Immunizations, Infectious



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Lake
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Wexford



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Disease Control, STI Testing and Counseling, WIC, Maternal Infant Health Program, Healthy Families of Northern Michigan, Children's Special Health Services, Hearing and Vision Screening, Family Planning, Cancer Screening, Worksite Wellness, Smoking Cessation, Substance Use Prevention, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Environmental Health Services. DHD #10 serves Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, and Wexford counties. For more information, visit www.dhd10.org.

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