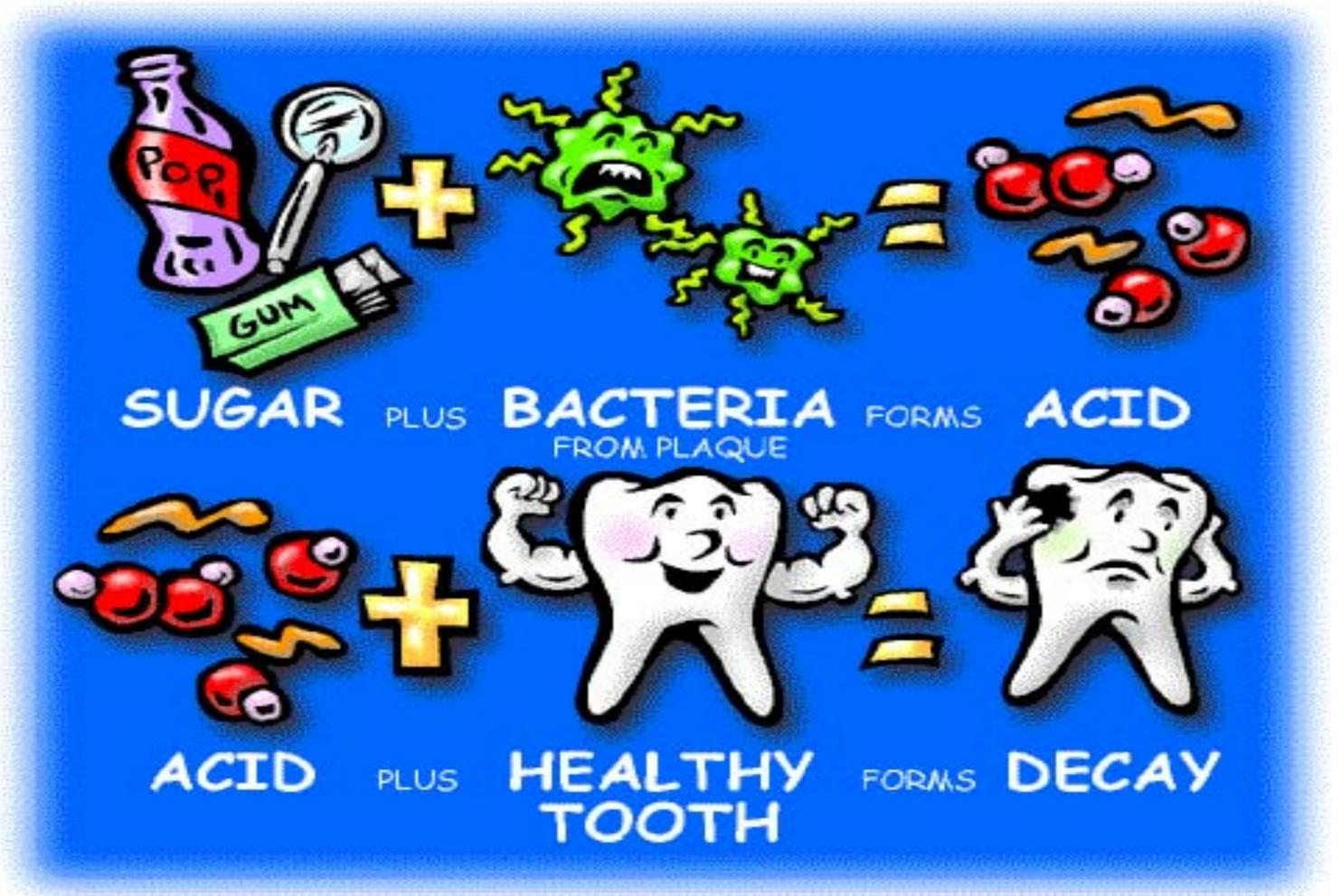


CAVITIES ARE PREVENTABLE

Childhood cavities can be prevented. They are caused by germs in the mouth interacting with sugars in food and drinks. You can't avoid germs or sugars, but you can limit exposure to them.

Cavities can lead to more serious health problems such as infected teeth, generalized infection, or even death.

Avoid emergency room visits for sore mouths and surgery for sick teeth.



Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



WHY BABY TEETH ARE IMPORTANT

Did you know that cavities can start in children under 1 year of age who have one or more teeth? Many children who don't get dental care lose their baby teeth early because of cavities.

Baby teeth help children chew food, speak well, and guide permanent teeth in place. It is important that the baby teeth do not fall out early.

Baby teeth **are** important.



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MISSED SCHOOL DAYS

Childhood cavities cause a lot more than pain. Each year, about 51 million hours of school time are lost by children with infected teeth. Caregivers of children with infected teeth must often miss work which can mean lost wages and perhaps loss of job for too many absences. Some caregivers can't afford to stay home so their children go to school in pain, making learning difficult for them and often for their classmates.



Improve your child's opportunity to learn by keeping the teeth healthy.

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THE CAUSE OF CAVITIES

Tooth cavities are preventable. If you are a caregiver for children, be careful what they drink. Sugared drinks such as milk, juice and soda pop (when consumed often) can harm a child's baby AND permanent teeth. Limit these drinks to mealtimes. Offer plain tap water at other times.

Keep teeth healthy by:

- Drinking fluoridated water
- Using fluoridated toothpaste twice a day
- Visiting the dentist regularly or if your child does not have a dentist, asking your child's doctor or nurse practitioner to apply fluoride varnish to the teeth four times a year.



Fluoride varnish applied to your child's teeth by their medical provider will also help. Don't be shy; ASK FOR IT. Fluoride protects and strengthens teeth and prevents cavities.

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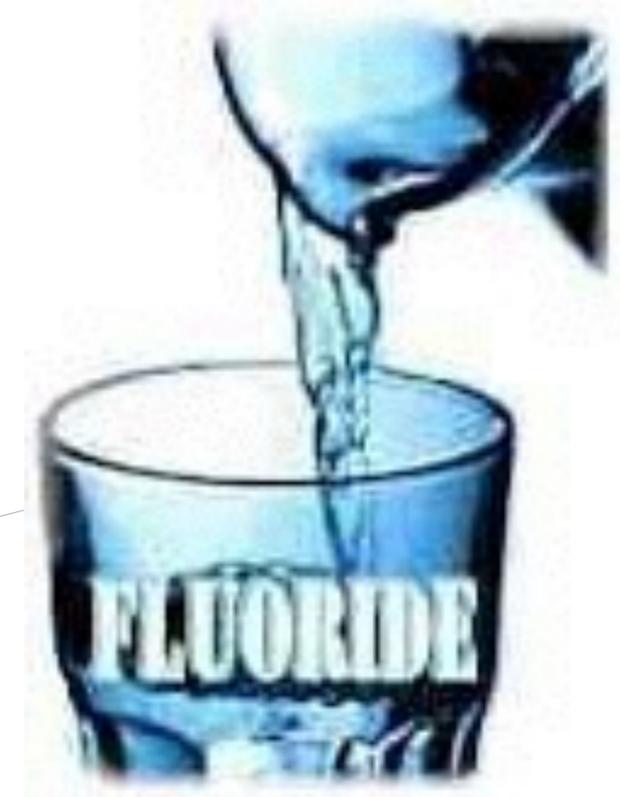


FLUORIDE

Fluoride is the key to healthy teeth because it prevents cavities. It is found in most of the foods we eat and in the public drinking water in most of Minnesota. Fluoride makes teeth more resistant to damage and strengthens them. If your child drinks well water, ask your local health department about its fluoride content because well water is often low in fluoride.

Always drink fluoridated water if possible.

Also, reverse osmosis filters (but not charcoal filters) remove fluoride from water. Make sure you are fluoride smart.



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GOOD TOOTH CARE FOR CHILDREN

Your child's teeth are important to good health and development.

You can prevent childhood cavities by following these simple steps:

- Limit sugary foods and drinks.
- Make sure your child's teeth are brushed twice daily with fluoride toothpaste starting when the first tooth appears.
- Take your child to the dentist every six months for an exam and fluoride treatment.
- If your child does not have a dentist, ask your child's doctor or nurse practitioner to apply fluoride varnish to your child's teeth every three months starting by age one at the latest.

Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



ORAL HEALTH PROJECT

Your community wants to improve the health of children's teeth.

Doctors, dentists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, teachers, social workers, business people, parents, social services groups and the media have teamed up to form the Minnesota Oral Health Project. Together, they want to reduce the number of children who get cavities.



Cavities can be prevented with good tooth care.

Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



HOW CAREGIVERS CAN MINIMIZE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDHOOD CAVITIES

1. Wipe your baby's teeth daily with a clean washcloth.
2. Do not wet your baby's pacifier with your spit. Do not pre-taste or pre-chew their food.
3. When the first tooth appears, clean teeth with a soft toothbrush and a smear of fluoride tooth paste. Then, wipe the inside of the mouth with a wet cloth until your child is old enough to spit (age 6-7).
4. Except at mealtimes, only put un-sugared water in your child's bottle or sippy-cup. Never put a baby to bed with a bottle.
5. Bring your child to a dentist by the first birthday.
6. If your child does not have a regular dentist ask your child's doctor or nurse practitioner for fluoride varnish every three months and tips to keep your child's teeth healthy.



Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



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IMPROVING ORAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

Improve the oral health of your child. Ask your child's dentist, doctor, nurse practitioner, or public health nurse to tell you about:

- 1) Early signs of tooth decay (the white spot).
- 2) Fluoride – what it is and how it prevents cavities.
- 3) The importance of fluoridated tap water and how to learn if your tap water has fluoride.
- 4) The value of fluoride varnish.
- 5) The value of dental sealants -what they are and how to get them. Sealants are different from but just as important as fluoride varnish.
- 6) The importance of brushing twice daily with a smear of fluoridated toothpaste.
- 7) Why baby teeth are important even though they fall out.



Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



WATER

We all need water to stay healthy. Tap water is clean and safe to drink.

It tastes good. It has no calories.

In nearly 99% of Minnesota communities, it contains fluoride which keeps teeth from developing cavities. Bottled water is more expensive than tap water and most brands have no fluoride.

If you drink well water, have it tested by your local Health Department for fluoride content. Most well water in Minnesota has too little fluoride to protect teeth from developing cavities. The Minnesota Oral Health Project supports fluoridated water.



Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



ADVICE TO CAREGIVERS

Don't be **bashful**.

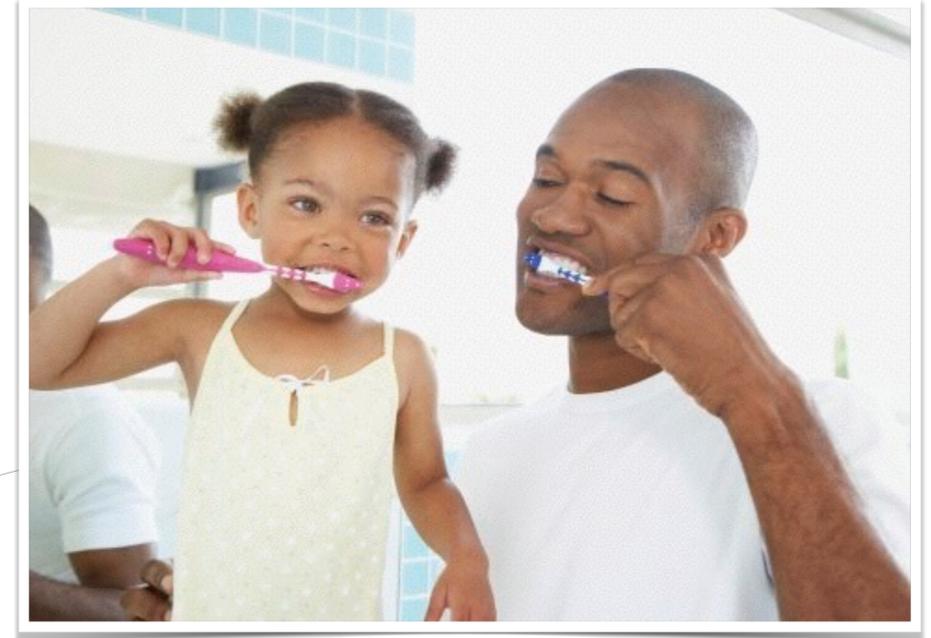
Feel **empowered**.

Take control on behalf of your child's teeth.

If your child does not have a regular dentist, ask your child's doctor or nurse practitioner to apply fluoride varnish to your child's teeth four times a year.

Cavities can be prevented with fluoride, tooth brushing, and limited exposure of teeth to sugars.

Learn about proper tooth care and proper diet. You have an important role in keeping your child's teeth healthy.



Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



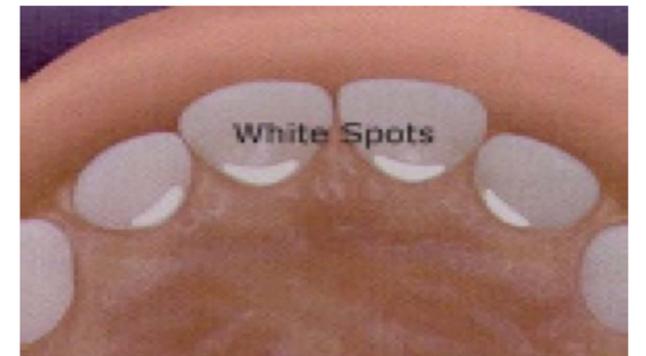
LIFT-THE-LIP

LOOKING FOR WHITE SPOTS, THE FIRST SIGN OF CAVITY



The picture to the left shows how to lift the lip to better see the teeth.

The picture to the right shows white spots which are the first sign of a cavity.



Roof of mouth



The picture on the left shows a brown spot. If fluoride varnish is applied to the white spot, the decay can often be stopped. If a brown spot appears, the tooth must be filled or pulled.

If you have questions about what you see on your child's teeth, bring your child to the child's primary care medical provider to determine if your child needs fluoride varnish which can be applied at the provider's office.

Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



MOUTH CARE STARTS AT BIRTH

As a mother-to-be, it is important to know how to care for your newborn's first teeth before they arrive.

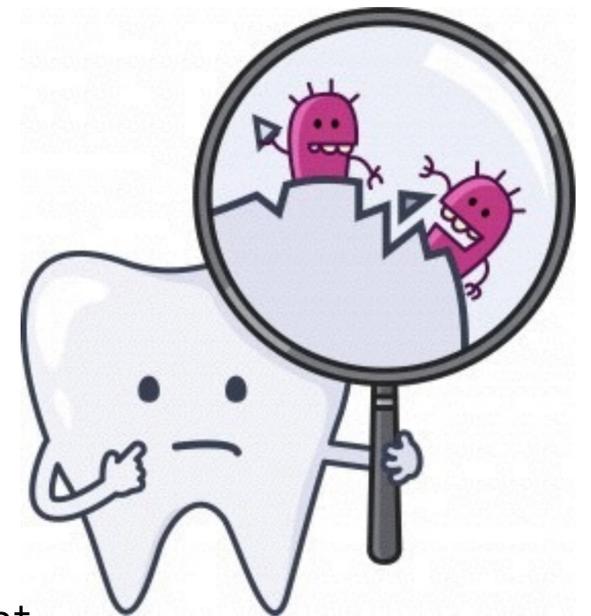
- Gently wipe out your newborn's mouth with a moist towel after every feeding. This will get you in the habit of cleaning your baby's mouth and your baby will get used to it too, making it easy once your baby has teeth.
- Avoid giving your baby sugared liquids. These can cause cavities.
- Though baby teeth fall out, they are very important: they help the child chew food, and pronounce words correctly
- Once the first tooth appears, brush it twice daily with a soft tooth brush and a small amount of fluoride toothpaste (the size of one-half of a pea). You can use the same toothpaste that you use for yourself. After each brushing, wipe out the mouth with a moist towel to get rid of the excess toothpaste.

Learn how you can help your child avoid cavities by visiting the Minnesota Oral Health Project website, minnesotaoralhealthproject.com, and liking us on Facebook. Cavities can be prevented.



RISK FACTORS FOR CAVITIES IN A YOUNG CHILD

- No daily exposure to fluoride from drinking water or toothpaste
- No fluoride varnish applied by a dentist or a primary care medical provider four times a year
- Frequent exposure to sugary foods and drinks
- Long-term exposure to liquid medicines that have been sweetened with sugar
- Use of bottle or sippy-cup containing anything other than tap water at nap or bed time or between meals
- Family members who have cavities
- Caregivers who wet the child's pacifier with her/his own saliva, or pre-taste or pre-chew the child's food
- No dentist who will see the child on a regular basis for prevention and any problems that arise
- Child has special health care needs, including developmental delays, physical, medical, or mental disabilities that prevent or limit performance of oral health care by caregiver



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EMERGENCY ROOM CARE FOR SICK TEETH IS INCOMPLETE CARE

For many families who have no dentist, the ER is the clinic of last resort when pain and infection arise because of sick teeth. But, be aware that

- ER care is incomplete because ER doctors only treat the pain and infection with medicines. They do not fix the teeth.
- The discomfort that led the child or adult to be seen in the ER often recurs, sometimes monthly.
- As caregivers of young children, try to keep your child's teeth healthy by:
 - Brushing their teeth twice a day starting with the appearance of the first tooth.
 - Give your child only tap water to drink day and night, in a bottle or sippy-cup. Do NOT add sugar to the water.

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Do you want your child to have healthy baby and permanent teeth?

If so, ask your child's medical provider about fluoride varnish. Varnish can be applied in less than 5 minutes and is non-invasive.



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ACIDIC BEVERAGES ARE BAD FOR TEETH

- Some beverages are almost as acidic as battery acid! Acidity is measured on a scale of 0 -14 where 0 is the most acidic and 14 is the least acidic. This is called a substance's pH. Battery acid has a pH of 1.00. This acidity has harmful effects on teeth. It erodes the enamel and leaves teeth sensitive, discolored, and vulnerable to cavities.
- When acidic beverages also contain high amounts of sugar, the damage is even greater.
- Brushing teeth does not entirely prevent this damage!
- The best way to prevent tooth damage caused by acidic beverages is to give your child only milk and water to drink.
- If your child must drink acidic liquids, let them drink it through a straw so the liquid has less contact with the teeth.

Here is the pH and sugar content of some common beverages

	pH	Teaspoons of sugar in 12 ounces
Pepsi	2.49	9.8 tsp
Coke	2.53	9.3 tsp
Mountain Dew	3.22	11 tsp
Orange Juice	3.30-4.19	8 tsp
Apple Juice	3.4	4.8 tsp
Water	7.0	0 tsp

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FILLINGS ARE NOT THE ANSWER TO CAVITIES

- Once a tooth has a filling, the tooth may still break down around the filling and require frequent repair.
- Over time, that tooth may require larger fillings, a crown, root canal or extraction. One tooth may end up costing thousands of dollars.
- To prevent tooth breakdown, pain, time lost from school, and possible loss of the tooth, remineralize early decay with fluoride varnish before a filling becomes necessary.
- Remineralized tooth enamel is more resistant to new decay than was the original enamel.
- Fluoride varnish does not require a dentist or drilling of the tooth. Rather, it requires a simple application that can be done by your child's primary care medical provider as part of well-child care.

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TOOTH CAVITY RISK FACTORS AND PREVENTION

Risk Factors

Primary caregiver had active decay in last 12 months

Primary caregiver does not have a dental home*

Bottle/sippy-cup use containing any liquid other than non-sugared water used all day and night

Frequent snacking

Enrolled in Medicaid or MNCare

Prevention

Child has a dental home*

Child drinks fluoridated water

Child has fluoride varnish applications every three months

Child's teeth are brushed twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste starting with the eruption of the first tooth

*Has a dentist who annually will offer two preventive visits and as many visits for diagnostic and/or restorative care as needed

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