

1. “How often should I brush and floss?”
 - Everyone should brush at least once each morning and once at night. Each time you brush, it should be for 3 minutes with a pea-sized amount of toothpaste. Put a timer in the bathroom. **DON'T RUSH WHEN YOU BRUSH!**
 - Flossing should be done at night **BEFORE** you brush. Any type of floss (waxed or un-waxed) will work.
 - Going to bed with clean teeth is extremely important! Don't allow your child to drink or eat during the night.

2. “What is the best kind of toothpaste?”
 - Any toothpaste approved by the American Dental Association. Look for the ADA seal on the back of the tube. Infants and toddlers need to use toothpaste without fluoride. Children should **NOT** swallow toothpaste with fluoride.
 - Some children do not like “minty” tasting toothpastes. Choose a flavor that your child likes such as bubble gum or fruit.

3. “What type of toothbrush is the best?”
 - A soft bristled toothbrush that is size-appropriate works best. Medium or hard bristled brushes can be harmful to your gums.
 - Battery-operated or “electric” brushes make brushing fun for some children. These are fine to use – but make sure that the batteries are fully charged. Always supervise your child.
 - A toothbrush should be replaced once every 3 months. The bristles become ineffective if used longer than that. Anytime your child is sick – replace his/her toothbrush. Harmful bacteria can live on your child's toothbrush and can cause him to get sick again.

4. “Is mouthwash safe for kids?”
 - Unless your child has gum disease and has been instructed by their dentist to use an antibacterial mouthwash – **DON'T**.
 - We recommend a fluoride mouthwash (ACT, Plak Smackers) for children ages 6 and above.
 - **DO NOT SWALLOW** Fluoride mouthwash.

5. “What is Fluoride/ Is it safe for my child?”
 - Fluoride is like vitamins for teeth. It soaks into the tooth enamel and makes it strong. Fluoride is found in most drinking water and toothpaste.
 - Topical Fluoride is applied to the teeth through fluoride mouthwash, “fluoride swish” program at school, toothpaste containing fluoride, or fluoride treatments in a dental office. These types of fluoride strengthen teeth that are in your mouth at the time of application.
 - Systemic fluoride is consumed through drinking water and strengthens teeth that are forming and that haven't erupted into your child's mouth.

- Both Topical and Systemic Fluoride are important.
 - Children under 6 years of age may develop fluorosis (discoloration or white spots) if they swallow too much fluoride. Supervise your children when they brush – to avoid them ingesting fluoridated toothpaste.
 - Infants/children should use non-fluoridated toothpaste.
6. “What should I do if my child breaks a tooth?”
- First Aid (WebMD link) www.AHEALTHYME.com/brokentooth
7. “Are baby teeth important?”
- Is it important to take care of baby teeth because they are crucial for:
 - Chewing
 - Speaking and speech development
 - Jaw development
 - Self-esteem
 - Baby teeth are also the space holders for permanent teeth. If these permanent teeth develop in a mouth that is unhealthy and full of cavities – chances are they will develop cavities as well.
8. “Is there fluoride in my water?”
- Catawba County Public Health offers collection bottles that can be mailed to the State lab for testing. The bottles are \$2.00
9. “When should my child start seeing a dentist?”
- At Catawba County Public Health, Dental Practice sees children at age 4. Before then, you should check and clean your child’s teeth at home. If a child under 4 complains of discomfort or if you think you see a cavity – you should contact a dentist immediately! Your child’s 1st dental visit should be happy and fun.
 - Schedule them for a check-up and cleaning visit. This is a pleasant experience and shows your child that the dentist is their friend.
10. “Help, my child has two sets of teeth!”
- Our receptionist gets calls daily from concerned parents. “My child has teeth coming in behind their baby teeth!” This is very common. Don’t panic. Sometimes permanent teeth will begin to erupt before the baby teeth move out of the way. Encourage your child to “wiggle” out the baby tooth on their own or with your help. You can apply ice to the gum tissue to numb the area before you begin to “wiggle” out the tooth. Sometimes baby teeth are stubborn and your child’s dentist has to help “wiggle” them out. IF a tooth has erupted in an unusual position – usually the child’s lips and tongue will gradually push it where it’s supposed to be.

11. “Can my child have braces?”

- Our office does make referrals to a local orthodontist. If our dentist feels that braces are necessary for your child, we can send them for an orthodontic consultation. But first – your child must be cavity free and do an excellent job of cleaning their teeth each day.

12. “What can my child expect at their 1st visit?”

- Your child’s 1st visit should be for a check-up and cleaning. This visit is fun and easy. We will take pictures (x-rays) of your child’s teeth. We will “count their teeth” as we check for cavities. We will check their growth and development and complete an oral cancer screening. We will instruct your child in proper brushing and flossing techniques and we will discuss health snack choices. Our “tickle toothbrush” will polish their teeth. We will place “vitamins”(fluoride varnish) on them as well. Healthy teeth are happy teeth and make for healthier, happier children!

13. “What are sealants?”

- Dental sealants are a plastic material that bonds to the grooves on the chewing surfaces of back teeth (molars and premolars). Sealants are placed on newly erupted teeth (both permanent and primary) to help prevent cavities.

14. “Will my child have soft teeth like me?”

- Research shows that there is no genetic link for “soft teeth”. People use this term to mean that you are prone to get cavities. 3 things are needed for cavities: 1. A vulnerable tooth, 2. Harmful bacteria (plaque) and 3. Food. The bad bacteria and food get together to form an acid which eats through the enamel to make a cavity (hole) in your tooth. If you avoid foods and drinks with high sugar content, brush and floss daily, visit your dentist 2 times each year – you can avoid cavities. Using fluoridated toothpaste and mouth wash will help as well.