



From the Nurse
Denise Flores 247-3180
floresd@bpsmail.org

Nutrition and Dental Health for Children **February is National Dental Health month.**

Nutrition Tips for Parents taken from *Pediatric Dental Health* www.dentalresource.org

- Keep only healthy foods in the house. Buying “whole-wheat” products, i.e., crackers, snacks, and bread are healthier choices. Avoid buying sticky sweet snacks or soda, as these are very destructive to teeth. Avoid sticky foods such as candy, raisins, and fruit roll-ups.
- Teach your children the importance of healthy eating habits. Try not to let sugars dominate your child’s diet.
- Make healthy food fun by providing a variety of healthy snacks, fruit, and vegetables. Snacking on cheese can help prevent tooth decay. Aged cheddar, Monterey Jack, and Swiss cheese are best for this purpose.
- Let your children know that soda and junk food causes cavities. Offer your children milk or water instead of juice. Teenage girls especially should drink plenty of milk and avoid soda to prevent osteoporosis in the bones.
- Help your young child brush after every meal.

The American Dental Association recommends the following for good oral hygiene:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with ADA accepted fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner. Decay-causing bacteria still linger between teeth where toothbrush bristles can’t reach. Flossing removes plaque and food particles from between the teeth and under the gum line.
- Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks.
- Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams.

Talk to your dentist about what types of oral care products will be most effective for you. Replace your toothbrush every three or four months or sooner if the bristles become frayed. A worn toothbrush will not do a good job of cleaning your teeth. Children’s toothbrushes often need replacing more frequently than adults because they can wear out sooner.

For children sometimes visiting the dentist can be an uncertain experience. The ADA has a kid friendly interactive story “Marty Goes to the Dentist” at www.ada.org/public/games/story.asp as well as other resources for parents and children.

For some fun February treat ideas visit my Sowam’s nurse webpage!

