

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Among the many important preparations for the school day is maintaining a healthy mouth. Dental decay remains the most common chronic disease among children. Children experience unnecessary pain and suffering from tooth decay. The good news about tooth decay is that it is preventable when eating a healthy diet, having good oral hygiene habits and maintaining routine dental care with fluoride and sealants. It is important starting in the preschool and early grades for your child to learn about the importance of a healthy mouth.

**Importance of a Healthy Mouth:**

- Teeth help us eat, speak, sing, and smile.
- Healthy gums and bone help hold teeth in place.
- Cheeks, lips and palate are essential for chewing and speaking.
- The tongue helps us speak and taste foods.
- Baby teeth hold space in the jaw for permanent teeth developing under the gums.
- Baby teeth extracted (removed) too early can cause permanent teeth to be misaligned.
- Foods are divided into sticky or crunchy for their effect on teeth, when in the mouth do they clean teeth or do they stick on teeth and feed the plaque, encouraging a cavity?
- Rinse with water after eating when you do not have a brush. This washes away food and plaque (mouth germs).

Brushing and Flossing both the baby and permanent teeth is important to protect and maintain healthy teeth. Flossing helps remove food and bacteria from between the teeth and places the toothbrush cannot reach. Good oral health means brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste before school and before bedtime. Please encourage your child to make brushing and flossing a daily habit. Good oral care will aid your child in germ prevention.

The above topics are important to discuss at home as well as in school. Please encourage your child to make brushing and flossing a daily habit. It is recommended that your child see a dentist for an oral exam and cleaning twice a year to prevent dental problems that would not allow your student to learn to his or her fullest capacity.

The Healthy Smiles program hopes all of our students strive for good oral hygiene which will contribute to a successful school year.

Thank you,

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