

What Is A Dental Home?

Submitted by:

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According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), a dental home is, "...the ongoing relationship between the dentist and the patient, inclusive of all aspects of oral health care delivered in a comprehensive, continuously accessible, coordinated, and family-centered way. Establishment of a dental home begins no later than 12 months of age and includes referral to dental specialists when appropriate."

Establishing a dental home for a child includes several benefits. A dental home should provide:

- Comprehensive care including (1) emergency care and, (2) prevention strategies of oral disease.
- A prevention program that is suited to the child's individual circumstances.
- Diagnosis of oral diseases and conditions.
- Guidance regarding growth and development issues, such as teething, thumb, or pacifier habits.
- A plan in case the child has a traumatic injury to the oral area.
- Information regarding proper oral hygiene.
- Information regarding the association between diet and dental disease.

In today's column, let's focus on a couple of these issues.

First, let's talk about oral hygiene for the infant or toddler. Parents should brush their child's teeth when the first tooth erupts with a soft bristled brush twice per day. Do not use a parent's toothbrush for this! Bacteria that cause cavities can be transmitted from the parent to the child in this way. Similarly, eating utensils should not be shared between parent and child.

It can be helpful to brush the child's teeth by using what is known as the "knee to knee" technique. The parents sit facing each other, knee to knee, and the child lays on their laps. The parent toward the "feet end" of the child can help control movement of arms and legs. The parent toward the "head end" controls movement of the head and brushes the teeth. If a parent is alone, place the child in a cradling position to brush the teeth.

Some of you are saying, "if it were only that easy". We know! It's normal for toddlers to sometimes resist brushing the teeth and these little guys and gals can move around quite a bit. Hang in there, moms and dads, and help them to the best of your ability during those times. By the way, it's OK to use the old back and forth, scrub brush technique for brushing on wiggly toddlers. Trying to use intricate, circular brushing technique that many dentists recommend for adults probably won't work that well. Many authorities believe that parents do a better job of brushing for wiggly toddlers using the scrub brush technique.

One last suggestion. Consult with your dentist regarding the use of fluoridated toothpaste for children under two years of age. Ingestion of too much fluoride by swallowing toothpaste can cause discoloration of the developing permanent teeth. Children over the age of two should not use more than a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.

Here's to improving your family's oral health in 2014. Happy New Year!

Dentistry For The Entire Family



- A pediatric dentist and a general dentist in one location.
- Treatment always explained to the patient and/or parent by the dentists.
 - Communication with patients is always a priority.
 - Convenient hours, including Saturdays.
 - PPO providers for most insurances.
 - Nitrous oxide available for anxious patients.



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-Bethany S.

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