

# Top Ten Tips for Tip Top Teeth

Submitted by:  
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**TAYLOR**  
... DENTISTRY ...  
*Pediatric & General Dentistry*

Here are the top picks for maintaining excellent oral health with your child:

1. Brush at least twice per day for two minutes, especially before bedtime. Because the mouth tends to dry out while sleeping, nighttime is an especially bad time for cavities to start forming.
2. For children under 8 years of age, parents should help brush. Smaller children haven't developed their hand coordination good enough to brush their teeth well.
3. For many children, parents need to at least supervise and make sure that the child is brushing for an adequate amount of time (2 minutes).
4. Floss! Again, for many children and the lack of hand coordination, parents should help.
5. Children less than one year of age don't spit out toothpaste very well. Their toothpaste should be a non-fluoridated toothpaste. Swallowing fluoridated toothpaste during the very young years may cause discoloration (fluorosis) of the permanent teeth that are forming. For children between one and three, only a smear or grain of rice size of fluoridated toothpaste should be used. Consult with your dentist regarding fluoride use in the young child.
6. Drinking water should be fluoridated. Omaha water is optimally fluoridated. Most bottled water has very little fluoride. Children with teeth forming in their jaws need this kind of fluoride to help reduce cavities. In addition, reverse osmosis water filters take fluoride out of the water.
7. Don't be a nibbler! Nibbling at sugary snacks throughout the day increases the risk of cavities. This is also true of cereals, chips, granola bars, fruit roll-ups, and other carbohydrates.... There are hidden sugars in these foods and can be extremely decay producing.
8. Many sports drinks contain high amounts of sugar. For the athlete in the family, frequent sips of sports drinks may cause more frequent visits to the dentist.
9. If the child's gums bleed while brushing, this is likely a sign of gingivitis. When brushing, make sure the bristles are reaching the gums. For many patients, this means the lip must be pushed out of the way in order to reach the gums. If the gums are kept clean, they will heal in about a week and the child will not bleed during brushing.
10. Consider preventive treatments, such as sealants and a fluoride mouthwash. Ask your dentist if these would be appropriate for your child.

Wait a minute! We forgot one! See your dentist regularly!

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