DELTA DENTAL®

February is National Children's Dental Health Month!

Your child's teeth are very important for proper eating, speech development and growth into adulthood. Baby teeth begin to appear at approximately six months of age and need to be cared for by an adult caregiver until children are about age seven years old. Young children do not have the hand coordination to properly clean (brush and floss) their teeth.

Your baby's first dental visit should take place within six months of their first tooth erupting or before their first birthday. A quick exam, proper homecare techniques, nutritional counseling, and any parental concerns can be discussed at this visit.

When your child's first permanent molar erupts—around age six years, and their second permanent molar erupts, around age 12 years old, it's time to have sealants placed on these teeth. Sealants will protect the chewing surfaces of these molars from developing cavities where even the smallest of toothbrush bristles can't reach.

For children of all ages, keeping food and drink limited to specific times of the day, or as part of a meal can help prevent cavities. Constant drinking and snacking increases the chance of cavities. Bacteria in our mouths produce acid when food is present, and this acid attack continues for 20 minutes after the last bite or sip. Juice, diet soda and energy drinks are some of the most acidic drinks available, and are responsible for much of the decay experienced by children and teenagers. Regular flossing and brushing, after meals, will help remove acid producing bacteria.

Healthy nutrition, sealants, fluoride, good flossing and bushing habits along with regular dental visits will help keep your children's teeth healthy for their lifetime!

- Jean McPheters, RDH