

SPRING 2011



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MOTHER'S DAY CONTEST

Mother's Day is on May 8, 2011! Visit our website at www.foresthillortho.com or our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/foresthilloortho for details on our in-house contest!!!

CALENDAR CONTEST

Forest Hill Orthodontics presents our 2012 Calendar contest. This year's theme is... What makes YOU smile. Entry deadline date is July 29, 2011. Visit our website at www.foresthillortho.com or our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/foresthilloortho for details.

Fluoride and Tooth Decay



Fluoride is a compound of the element fluorine, the 13th most abundant element, which is naturally present in water, soil, and air, as well as in most foods. Fluoride is absorbed easily into tooth enamel, helping to strengthen it, and is also effective in preventing cavities from forming.



Fluoride was first added to community water supplies in the 1940s, but today, most cities and countries add fluoride to their public water supplies. Community water fluoridation is an effective, safe, and inexpensive way to prevent tooth decay. This method of fluoride delivery benefits people of all ages and socioeconomic status.

Your teeth are made of a form of the mineral calcium. Bacteria that naturally live in your mouth combine with food particles and become plaque, which secretes acid that can weaken a spot in your tooth enamel, which in turn, becomes a cavity, also called tooth decay. Fluoride helps to prevent this tooth decay in three ways:

1. The fluoride in your saliva can be absorbed into the surface of a tooth where decay has occurred. The presence of fluoride then attracts other minerals, such as calcium, resulting in the formation of new tooth mineral.
2. The fluoride present in your mouth not only repairs the decay damage to your teeth, it creates a tooth surface that is more resistant to decay. The mineral that is re-formed on your tooth by fluoride is a "harder" mineral compound than what existed when the tooth initially formed and is therefore more resistant to the acid in plaque.
3. The third way in which fluoride prevents tooth decay is to decrease the rate at which the bacteria in dental plaque produce acid. Fluoride disrupts plaque's ability to metabolize sugars, which lowers the amount of acid that will be produced, which means fewer attacks on your tooth enamel.

To take advantage of these decay-preventing properties, you need prolonged exposure to a very small amount of fluoride. Brushing three times a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride is an ideal way to keep fluoride in your saliva. So is drinking fluoridated water. Research has shown that simply introducing fluoride into a city's drinking water supply can reduce its inhabitants' rate of tooth decay between 40 and 70 percent.

If given to children while teeth are forming, fluoride becomes part of a child's teeth and gives some protection from decay for the life of the teeth. However, the intake of fluoride in young children should be monitored. Too much fluoride in this developmental stage of your child's life can lead to dental fluorosis, a discoloration of the tooth enamel. That's why you should help your child brush his or her teeth when they're very young (up until about age six). Use only a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste and make sure your child doesn't swallow their toothpaste. If your child is younger than two, talk to your dentist about an alternate to fluoride toothpaste.

Used with an excellent regime of oral hygiene and a balanced diet, fluoride can help keep your teeth cavity free for life.

Growing Up Cavity Free



In many countries, tooth decay (and gum disease) is the second most common disease, with only the cold more common. Studies have linked poor oral health in children to poor performance in school, poor social relationships and less success in later life. But



whether you're six or sixty, with today's technology and advances in dental medicine, it's easier than ever before to prevent cavities and gum disease.

To help your kids grow up cavity free, here are a few tips...

- Don't make the mistake of thinking baby teeth don't need as much care as permanent ones. Even though they're eventually lost, they do an important job of holding a place in your child's mouth for the permanent teeth.
- Until they're old enough for an infant-sized toothbrush, clean your baby's teeth with a dampened piece of gauze or washcloth.
- Once your child is old enough, help her/him to use a child-sized toothbrush. (Use only a 'pea' sized dot of fluoride toothpaste and don't allow your child to swallow it.)
- Around age six your child should be coordinated enough to brush her/his own teeth with an appropriate sized, soft-bristled toothbrush.
- Brush at least twice a day, supervising while your child is young.
- Replace toothbrushes every three months and never allow sharing.
- If your child has been ill, replace their toothbrush as soon as they're feeling better.
- Check to make sure that your child is brushing properly. Don't let them brush too fast or hard or miss areas.
- Your child's teeth should be flossed at least once a day. By age nine, most children will have the skill to floss on their own.
- Eat nutritious foods and drink healthy beverages. Limit snacks, especially sugary or sticky sweets that cling to teeth. The best time to eat sweet foods is with a meal or at the end of a meal, when natural salivation will wash most of them away.
- By age one, have your child checked by a dentist. There are many books that can help you make your child's first dental visit a treat instead of a scare.
- Your child should have an orthodontic check-up by age seven. Many potential problems can be more easily and economically fixed during growing years.
- Once permanent teeth have come in, talk to your dentist about dental sealants and fluoride treatments.
- Get regular dental check-ups and cleanings.
- Gums should not bleed after flossing or brushing. (This can be a sign of poor oral hygiene or nutritional deficiency.)
- Eat a balanced diet and limit between meal snacks.
- If your child has trouble using dental floss, try an interdental cleaner. Your dentist can recommend one and instruct your child on proper use.
- Make sure your child uses a professional mouth guard for sports and play. While it won't prevent cavities, a guard can keep your child's teeth from being damaged. (Almost one third of all dental injuries happen in sports accidents.)

Perhaps most important of all...set an excellent example. Let your child see you taking excellent care of your teeth. Show your child how to have a healthy smile for life.

Choosing the Best Toothpaste



Thanks to better care and technological advances, more people than ever before are keeping their teeth throughout their lives. The most



important thing you can do to make sure you're one of those who keep their natural teeth is to brush and floss regularly.

Most dental decay is caused by plaque, a sticky, colorless bacteria that is constantly forming on your teeth. Saliva, food (especially sugar) and fluids combine to produce plaque, which collects on teeth and where teeth and gums meet. Plaque that is not removed by regular brushing and flossing can harden into tartar, a crusty deposit that can only be removed by a dentist. Plaque also leads to gum disease, a potentially serious infection that can erode bone and destroy the tissues surrounding teeth. Flossing removes plaque between teeth, and brushing removes plaque from the large surfaces of the teeth and, if done correctly, from just under the gums.

With brushing being such an important factor in your oral health, you can see why your choice of a toothpaste is important, but with so many brands and types - plaque control, tartar control, whitening, gum care, sensitive teeth, polish, smoker's - from which to choose, picking the right toothpaste can be a daunting task. Your dentist or dental hygienist can help narrow the field by discussing what your special brushing needs are.

If you tend to build up plaque or tartar quickly, you'll want a plaque or tartar-control toothpaste. Anti-plaque/tartar toothpastes will have ingredients such as fluoride and/or antibacterial agents to limit plaque and tartar formation. (Check with your dentist before choosing fluoride toothpaste for your young children. Excessive fluoride ingestion by pre-school age children can lead to discoloration of the permanent teeth. If your child uses fluoride toothpaste, make sure s/he does not swallow toothpaste while brushing.)

If you smoke or drink tea or coffee, a whitening toothpaste may help with stains. However, whitening toothpastes only remove adherent stain. The ingredients necessary to actually bleach your teeth are not chemically stable enough to be included in toothpaste. Use caution with those toothpastes made to remove heavy stains, frequently referred to as "smoker's toothpaste" or "tooth polish". These toothpastes may be excessively abrasive and may cause progressive wearing away of the tooth and supporting tissues. (Also, if you smoke, be sure to see your dentist regularly, as smokers are at increased risk of gum disease, early tooth loss and also soft tissue conditions including oral cancer.)

Temperature sensitive teeth will benefit from a toothpaste made to desensitize your teeth. Your needs may change as you age, so don't be surprised if your hygienist recommends a type of toothpaste you haven't used before.

Once you've determined which type of toothpaste is best, choose the one that tastes and feels best and doesn't cause irritation or sensitivity problems. If you like the flavor and texture of your toothpaste, you'll brush more and longer. And brushing well and regularly means you'll be smiling with your natural teeth well into your mature years.

Happy Spring!