

Flossing is essential in order to prevent cavities between teeth. Flossing has to start as soon as children loose space between their back molars. This can occur as early as 3 years old.

B. HEALTHY FOODS=HEALTHY TEETH : SUGAR IS THE ENEMY!

SUGAR INTAKE must be controlled to assure minimal contact of sugar with teeth. Three practical measures are helpful in addition to an overall decrease of sugar in the diet:

- i. Eliminate all sticky sweets since sugar in this form remains in prolonged contact with teeth and acid producing bacteria. Examples include caramels, tootsie rolls, roll ups, swedish fish, toffee, fudge etc.
- ii. Reduce the frequency of sweet snacks by consolidation. The more exposures per day the teeth have to sugar, the greater the risk of decay. Rather than allowing your child to have 3 cookies at 3 separate times, have them eat all 3 in one sitting.
- iii. Substitute healthy fruits, vegetables, and nuts for sweets. Consult our good food/bad food list

C. STRENGTHEN TOOTH ENAMEL WITH FLUORIDE



TOOTH ENAMEL can be made more resistant to decay. The greatest increase in decay resistance is produced by drinking fluoridated water into the teenage years. If your town's water supply is not fluoridated, this essential nutrient can be taken as a supplement in the form of chewable tablets, drops or in combination with multiple vitamins. Either way, there is a 60-70% reduction in decay. This fluoride is

absorbed systemically by enamel during tooth formation.

Once teeth have formed and erupted, fluoride can be absorbed topically, that is, by coating teeth with fluoride. Semiannual fluoride treatments by the dentist reduce decay by 30-40%. Home fluoride rinses (ACT[™], Fluoriguard[™]), regular toothpaste and dentist prescribed fluoride gel (Prevident[™], Gel-Kam[™]) all help reduce decay by an addition 10-30%. Decay reducing effects of all forms of fluoride are additive. Therefore, maximum benefit is obtained when your child has had proper systemic as well as topical fluoride exposure. Fluoride tablets are for developing teeth; fluoride in toothpaste and in topical supplements are for teeth once they are in the mouth.