Oral Health for Infants, Children, and Adolescents

Beginning at birth, establish a daily routine for a lifetime of good oral health.

Infants (Birth until 2 years)

- Prior to tooth eruption, clean the infant's gums with a damp washcloth at least once a day.
- As soon as the first tooth appears, brush with a soft infant-sized toothbrush at least once a day - preferably at bedtime.
- For children younger than 2 years, talk to your health care professional about the use of fluoride toothpaste.
- Schedule the first dental visit by the child's first birthday.

Children (Ages 2 to 12 years)

- Brush teeth with a child-sized toothbrush at least twice a day - preferably after breakfast and before bedtime.
- Parents must help with brushing until children are at least 7 to 8 years old.
- Replace toothbrush every 3 to 4 months or when bristles are frayed.
- Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Encourage children to spit excess toothpaste into the sink.
- Daily flossing should begin as soon as teeth touch each other - parents must help floss children's teeth until they are at least 8 to 9 years old.
- Continue regular dental visits. A dentist can decide how often visits are needed.
- Talk to a dentist about the need for sealants and additional fluoride.

Adolescents (Ages 13 years and older)

- Brush teeth at least twice a day - preferably after breakfast and before bedtime.
- Replace toothbrush every 3 to 4 months or when bristles are frayed.
- Use fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss at least once daily.
- Continue regular dental visits. A dentist can decide how often visits are needed.
- Talk to a dentist about the need for additional fluoride.