

# MAKING IT PERMANENT:

## DENTAL CARE FOR ADOLESCENTS - 11 YEARS AND UP

A lot is going on in your life right now! First Impressions recommends regular dental cleanings and visits to our office every six months, regular brushing and flossing, and healthy living! Good habits promote healthy teeth, gums and overall good health not to mention a smile that makes you feel and look great.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

Regular check-ups are an important part of preventative care and a six month dental cleaning and examination is recommended. This regime helps the First Impressions team and parents work together to identify issues as soon as possible regarding the child's ongoing oral hygiene and dental health. If your child has special healthcare needs, we may recommend more frequent appointments based on your child's needs or susceptibility to cavities. Here are all the things you and your child should do daily to help ensure a lifetime of healthy smiles:

- Brush at least twice daily, especially before bedtime.
- Floss daily.
- Eat a well balanced diet and limit harmful (sugary) snacks between meals.
- Use fluoridated toothpaste.
- On the recommendation of your dentist, rinse with a fluoride containing mouthwash.
- If you are at an increased risk of decay, see your dentist about professionally applied fluoride varnish and/or xylitol gum.
- Talk to your dentist about a fluoride supplement if your drinking water is low in fluoride content.
- Limit your consumption of beverages containing sugar, including sports drinks, juices, and soda.
- Encourage drinking water in between meals.
- Dental sealants are recommended on six and twelve year molars. A sealant is a thin plastic coating that is applied to the chewing surface and is recommended shortly after those teeth erupt.
- Promote a healthy diet as much as possible with planned meals and snacks that are appropriate for your child's age—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and unsweetened dairy products are all good choices.
- Limit the consumption of sugary foods to meal times and avoid sticky foods such as fruit roll-ups and dried fruits.
- Be familiar with the normal appearance of your gums and teeth so you can see problems that may be occurring.



### TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURIES TO THE MOUTH AND TEETH:

- If a permanent tooth is knocked out, you should retrieve it, holding it by the top part (crown), rinse it gently with water to remove any debris, reinsert it into the socket, making sure it is facing the correct direction and take the child to the dentist immediately. If you can't replace the tooth, put it in a container of cold milk or in a cold wet cloth and bring the child and the tooth to the dentist immediately.
- If a tooth is chipped or cracked, rinse the mouth with water, apply a cold compress and see the dentist as soon as possible.
- Wear a seatbelt while in a vehicle and make sure everyone else in the car is wearing a seatbelt as well.
- Protective gear such as mouth guards, helmets, elbow and kneepads or face protectors should always be worn for activities that could result in an injury to the mouth or teeth.

# MAKING IT PERMANENT DENTAL CARE FOR ADOLESCENTS (CONT...)

- Avoid lip, tongue and facial piercings as they can host bacteria and/or cause chipped teeth.
- Never smoke or use smokeless tobacco products as these can cause long term damage to the teeth and supporting bone structure.

## DENTAL SEALANTS: LONG LASTING DENTAL INSURANCE

- Four out of five cavities in children under twelve occur on the biting surfaces of the back teeth.

The teeth most at risk of decay are the six year molars and twelve year molars. The biting surfaces of these molars erupt into the mouth often with deep grooves and pits. Even if your child brushes his or her teeth, it is almost impossible for him or her to clean the deep hills and valleys on the back teeth. These teeth are at greatest risk of decay when they first erupt into the mouth. Sealants are placed on these teeth to seal out food and plaque thus reducing the risk of decay. One might say, "Why is this so important"?

The six year molars are considered the most important teeth in your child's mouth. Once they erupt into the mouth, they act as foundations for the dental arch and its development. They also aid in keeping the other teeth in their positions. A dental sealant is a clear or white plastic coating that is painted onto the biting surfaces of the back teeth. Sealants are applied in a liquid state and harden and bond to teeth in only a few seconds. Sealants should be a part of your child's preventive dental care, along with brushing and flossing, use of fluoride, good nutrition and regular dental check-ups. Not only are sealants very effective, they also cost a lot less than filling cavities.



DENTAL SEALANT

## ORTHODONTIC CARE

- Orthodontics is that specialty branch of dentistry dealing with crooked or misaligned teeth and jaws.

Straight teeth are important for a nice smile which in turn is important for esthetics and good looks as well as psychological confidence and social acceptability. Correct jaw positioning as well as well-positioned teeth are together important for mastication (chewing), digestion, speech and good looks, in other words physiological and psychological health. Straight teeth are also easier to keep clean and this enhances the health of the gums and of the oral cavity in general.

Orthodontic problems could manifest at any age, but most orthodontic concerns are diagnosable between six and fourteen years of age. Many issues such as single tooth crossbite, could be treated as young as age seven or eight. Many concerns should be addressed and treated while the child is actively growing, between eight and sixteen years of age. Males, on average, continue to grow about two years later than females and may continue active growth into the seventeenth year. Growth modifications or growth stimulation (orthopedics) of the jaws must be accomplished while the patient is growing.

At First Impressions, we do an orthodontic evaluation at every visit. Your dentist or hygienist will discuss the right time to be evaluated by an orthodontist.

