

THE YEARS IN BETWEEN:

DENTAL CARE FOR CHILDREN 5-10 YEARS

A lot is going on in your growing child's life and mouth during this stage. Baby teeth are starting to fall out to make way for adult teeth. 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 wellness. Daily preventative care will help prevent difficult problems like cavities and gum disease.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- When baby teeth are ready to come out, they will feel loose and eventually fall out on their own. The roots of the permanent first molars and permanent incisors are beginning to mineralize at this time too. Sometimes the adult teeth erupt right in front of or behind the baby teeth and this may result in two rows of teeth. A consultation with your dentist at this time is important to determine the status of the baby teeth.
- Around age six, you'll start to notice that your child is losing his/her "baby face" as their lower jaw and facial shape start to change to accommodate their adult teeth. At this age permanent molars start making their way into the mouth. The front baby teeth will get loose too, allowing the permanent incisors to grow through the gums.
- While the schedule is different for every child, by age 10 most children have their permanent incisors and the baby molars are beginning to loosen and fall out. The six year permanent molars are in position and the second sets of permanent molars, the twelve year molars, are beginning to find their way into the mouth.
- By about age 13 your child will have all of his or her permanent teeth with the exception of the last molars, called the wisdom teeth.



WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

Regular check-ups are an important part of preventative care. A dental cleaning and examination is recommended every six months. This 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 health care 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.
- Parents should still assist children with brushing until around age eight, to make sure plaque is being properly removed.
- Limit your child's consumption of beverages containing sugar, including sports drinks and juices.
- 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.

TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURY TO YOUR CHILD'S TEETH:

- Do what you can to minimize your child's risk of an oral injury and know what to do if an injury should occur.
- Never attempt to reinsert a baby tooth that has fallen out.
- Use an age-appropriate car seat/booster seats at all times.
- Don't place your child in the basket of a shopping cart.
- Use safety locks on cabinets and doors.
- Keep appliances and dangling cords out of your child's reach.
- Keep safety gates at the top and bottom of stairways.
- Always secure and childproof windows above the ground floor.
- Supervise your child on the playground and make sure the equipment is properly working, maintained, and is age appropriate for your child.
- Make sure your child wears a helmet when cycling, scooting, or boarding of any kind.
- Put emergency contact numbers in a prominent place so you or any caregivers have easy access to them.

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 when the right time is for your child to be evaluated by an orthodontist.

