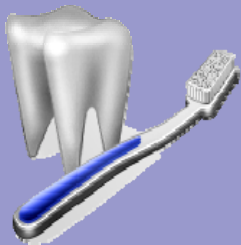


## Points of Interest:

- Young children need help with tooth brushing until they are about 7 years old.
- Make some Valentines snacks for your children that are also tasty treats for their teeth.



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# Healthy Kansas Kids

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## Children's Dental Health Month

Taking care of your child's teeth and gums is important. Children need healthy teeth to help them chew and speak clearly. Baby teeth also make space for adult teeth. The good oral health habits your child learns now can last a lifetime. Young children want to brush their own teeth, but they need help until they are about 7 years old.

You can take care of your child's mouth by helping your child brush twice a day, after breakfast and before bed with fluoride toothpaste. Brush the front and back of your child's teeth, as well as the gum line of the front teeth and the tongue. Make sure your child spits out the toothpaste after brushing, but do not have your child rinse with water. The toothpaste that stays in your child's mouth is good for his teeth.

Take your child to the dentist for her first visit when she's about 1 year old. Things you can discuss with your dentist or dental health professional include how often to bring your child to the dentist, whether your child needs fluoride supplements to protect her teeth, when and how to floss your child's teeth,

what to do if your child hurts her mouth or breaks a tooth, and how to help your child stop sucking her thumb.

### When should dental care begin?

Dentists will agree that regular dental care should begin by one year of age, with check-ups at least twice each year for most children and adults. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends:

Birth to 6 months of age:

- Clean the infant's mouth with gauze after feedings and at bedtime.

- Consult your child's pediatrician regarding fluoride supplements.

Do not put the baby to bed with a bottle.

Six to 12 months of age:

- When the first tooth appears consult the dentist for an exam.

- As the child begins to walk, stay alert for potential dental and/or facial injuries.

Wean the child from breast or bottle by his/her first birthday.

Twelve to 24 months:

- See the dentist regularly. Generally, dental exams and cleanings are recommended every 6 months for children and adults.

As your child learns to rinse his/her mouth, and

as teeth erupt, brush with a pea-sized portion of fluoridated toothpaste.

Oral Health America recommends the following to ensure your child eats correctly to maintain a healthy body and teeth:

- Encourage children to eat fruits and vegetables, dairy products, lean meats and fish, and whole grains, and beans. These foods make children feel good and stay healthy.

- Limit sugary and sticky snacks, sodas, and juice, and starchy foods.

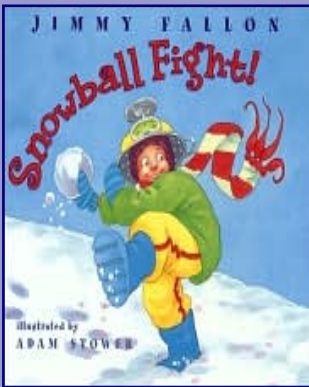
- Offer water as a healthy drink choice, and especially at the end of a meal to help rinse teeth and gums.

- Do not put your young child to bed with a bottle of milk, formula, or juice.

Sources: Oral Health America  
[www.oralhealthamerica.org](http://www.oralhealthamerica.org) and America Academy of Pediatric Dentists  
[www.AAPD.org](http://www.AAPD.org).

Resource kits about oral health care in child care programs are available by contacting your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency at 1-877-678-2548.

## Snowball Fight!



### Book and Activity:

**Snowball Fight!** By Jimmy Fallon, illustrated by Adam Stower  
In this delightful story, a boy and his young sister awake to the news that school is closed. They immediately plan a snowball fight and an all-in-fun snowball fight ensues.

This story celebrates a time-honored, childhood winter delight. You can't always control the timing and amount of snow, but you can help your child develop motor skills by creating an indoor snowball target toss. Make "snowballs" out of balled up socks, crumpled up newspa-

per or foam balls. Next, create targets of various heights and distances using cardboard boxes, buckets, or laundry baskets. Children can throw the "snowballs" at each target using an under-handed toss. Switch to an over-hand toss or vary the placement of the targets.

## Sweet Ideas for Little Valentines

Make Valentine's Day treats your child will remember! Instead of sugary candies, buy a heart-shaped cookie cutter and use it to cut sandwiches, whole-grain waffles or slices

of low-fat cheese. Add a few drops of red food coloring to skim milk or vanilla yogurt for a pretty pink accent to go along with red apple slices, strawberries or watermelon. If you

just can't resist a bag of candy, stay away from sticky and chewy candies. Plain chocolates like Hershey's Kisses or M&Ms dissolve more quickly and don't stick to the teeth.

## Tasty Treats for Teeth

Snacks are very important for young children. Their stomachs cannot hold as much food at one time as an adult's can. Snacks provide the calories, vitamins and minerals needed for rapidly growing children. But all snacks are not equal! Snacks such as fruit, vegetables, whole grain products like bread or crackers, and dairy products like low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese are good choices.

Try a few of these recipes and give your child's teeth a tasty treat!

**Bagel faces:** Cut a whole grain bagel in half and spread it with cream cheese or peanut butter. Top with assorted toppings (pineapple tidbits, grape halves, grated carrot, olive slices, finely chopped bell pepper).

**Yogurt cones:** Spoon low-fat yogurt into a small flat-bottomed ice cream cone. Top with fresh fruit. Sprinkle with low-

sugar cereal or granola for some crunch.

**Sweet potato fries:** Peel sweet potatoes, cut into sticks or wedges and place in a large Ziploc bag. Add 1-2 teaspoons of vegetable oil to the bag. Zip the bag shut and shake well. Spread fries out on a large baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes at 375 degrees, or until brown and tender. Sprinkle with a little salt, if desired.

