



# ***KENDALL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT***

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## **To Your Health**

**Give Your Children Something to Smile About!**

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. The Kendall County Health Department and the American Dental Association (ADA) are taking this time to raise awareness about the importance of oral health in our community's youth.

According to the ADA, it is important for children to develop good habits at an early age. To help with the process, it is important for parents to understand that setting good examples and scheduling regular dental visits helps children get a good start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums.

For longer lasting and healthier teeth it is important to start as soon as possible. The Kendall County Health Department offers these tips when caring for your baby's teeth:

- As soon as your child has teeth, you should start brushing them gently twice a day with a soft, wet toothbrush.
- Children younger than 2 should not use fluoride toothpaste unless a dentist recommends it.
- Schedule your toddler's first visit to the dentist as soon as the first tooth appears, which might be as early as 6 months
- It does matter if your child gets a cavity in his or her baby teeth! Even though the teeth will fall out they play a significant role in the health of their adult teeth.
- Avoid baby bottle tooth decay. Do not allow your baby to sleep with a bottle (or remove it after 15 minutes), avoid putting sugary liquids in bottles, and don't allow your baby to spend too much time sucking on the bottle.

As your children get older, it is important that they continue to practice good oral hygiene. To keep them on the appropriate track, here are some tips and guidelines to follow:

- Make sure they brush at least twice a day to remove plaque.
  - Teach them how to floss and encourage them to practice daily. Flossing helps remove food debris from in between the teeth that a toothbrush can not reach.
  - Encourage healthy and nutritious meals and limit the intake of sugary carbonated drinks.
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- Visit your dentist for regular check ups and cleanings. Ask about fluoride treatments and sealants which help prevent tooth decay.
  - Make sure your children wear a fitted mouth guard during sports. This will reduce injuries

to the mouth and teeth.

The Kendall County Health Department would like to remind parents that promoting good oral hygiene in the home is one of the first steps in helping your child establish a lifetime of healthy oral habits. Working together, we can give them something to smile about!

For more information on National Children's Dental Health Month contact the Kendall County Health Department at (630) 553-9100 or visit the American Dental Association's website at: <http://www.ada.org/prof/events/featured/ncdhm.asp#2010>.

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