

The best way to prevent tooth decay is through a combination of:

- \*\* Brushing and flossing
- \*\* Balanced diet
- \*\* Monitoring the frequency of eating
- \*\* Fluorides
- \*\* Sealants

After evaluating your child's dental health, Dr. Dorostkar and her staff will design a personalized program of home care for your child. This program will include brushing and flossing instructions, diet counseling, and if necessary, fluoride recommendations. By following these directions, you can help give your child a lifetime of healthy habits.

Here are some recommendations to help you keep your child's teeth and gums healthy:

1. Whenever possible, have your child brush after eating. Help young children with the final brushing. Most children do not acquire the manual dexterity needed to brush well until age 7 or 8.
2. Help your child floss when you see that the teeth contacts are tight together. Toothbrush bristles are unable to clean between contacts. Encourage flossing once a day. Children need help with flossing until about age 10. Using a floss holder is also very helpful for small mouths.
3. Shop smart! Do not routinely stock your pantry with sugary and starchy snacks. Buy "fun foods" just for special times.
4. Limit the number of snack times and choose nutritious snacks. Avoid sweet, sticky, and starchy foods between meals. Please see the enclosed snack list.
5. Avoid offering juice for thirst or as a snack. Even diluted fruit juice is sugary and can cause decay. Try to stick with water and milk for drinks.
6. Be cautious of rewarding positive behavior with candy. Remember to check snacking patterns at your child's daycare setting or school.
7. Use fluoridated toothpaste if recommended during your child's appointment and drink fluoridated water at home. Fluoride becomes incorporated in the enamel of teeth and makes it more resistant to acid breakdown and decay.

Another wonderful resource for information is the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry's website: [www.aapd.org](http://www.aapd.org) Check the "Info for Parents" link.