Eat Right to Keep Teeth Strong

Good eating habits help children’s and adult’s teeth stay healthy.
✓ Offer your family a variety of healthy foods, including at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, every day.
✓ Include milk and dairy products, which contain calcium, to help build strong teeth.
✓ Limit eating sugary and sticky foods, such as chips, cookies, cake, candy, and soda.
✓ Don’t eat sweets between meals. Save sweets for dessert after a meal. Chew sugarless gum with xylitol for 5 minutes after meals and snacks.

The Food Stamp Program provides healthy food to people with low income. For more information, call (800) 952-5253.

Simple Steps to Avoid the Spread of Tooth Decay
✓ Avoid sharing things that have been in your mouth with your child.
✓ Chew sugarless gum with xylitol.
✓ Use fluoride.
✓ Brush and floss every day.
✓ Eat a healthy diet.
✓ Visit the dentist.

Stop the Spread of Tooth Decay

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This pamphlet was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Stamp Program, through the California Nutrition Network for Healthy, Active Families, an equal opportunity provider and employer.

For families with children from birth to 5 years
Take Care of Your Own Teeth

✓ Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss daily. Look for the American Dental Association (ADA) seal on the toothpaste box.
✓ Visit the dentist at least once a year.
✓ Eat a healthy diet. Follow the tips in this pamphlet.
✓ Chew sugarless gum with xylitol.
✓ Ask your dentist or doctor about fluoride products that are best for you and your child.

Take Care of Your Child’s Teeth

✓ Breastfeed your child for at least one year.
✓ Take your child to the dentist by age one.
✓ Brush your child’s teeth with fluoride toothpaste after your child is old enough to spit out. Use only a small, pea-sized amount of toothpaste on the brush.
✓ Help your child brush his or her teeth until about age 6.
✓ Avoid sharing things that have been in your mouth with your child. This includes cups, spoons, straws, pacifiers, or toothbrushes.

Use Sugarless Chewing Gum with Xylitol

✓ Sugarless chewing gum with xylitol helps control the germs in your mouth that cause tooth decay. The word “xylitol” sounds like “zylitol.”
✓ Xylitol chewing gum tastes good.
✓ Chew xylitol gum for 5 minutes, 3 to 5 times a day, especially after meals and snacks.
✓ Do not give gum to a child under age 4.
✓ Read the label to see if the gum has xylitol.

Germs Are the Main Cause of Tooth Decay

✓ The germs that cause tooth decay can be spread from your mouth to your child’s mouth. This usually happens from age 6 months to two years of age.
✓ The spread of germs can happen when mothers share things that have been in their mouths with their children. This includes cups, spoons, straws, pacifiers, and toothbrushes.
✓ You can help your children have healthy teeth by lowering the level of germs in your mouth. The tips in this pamphlet will help.