

DID YOU KNOW?

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. Early tooth loss caused by tooth decay can result in delays in growth and development, impaired speech development, and inability to participate in childhood activities. According to the Make Your Smile Count Survey done by Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, in southern Wisconsin 19.1% of children have untreated decay. 57.1% have a caries history and 49.1% have sealants.

HOW DO CAVITIES HAPPEN?

The development of dental cavities requires a host, agent, environment, and time. The **host** can be susceptible teeth, crown or tooth, pits & fissures, smooth surface, and root surface. Bacteria are the **agent** that colonizes in the mouth and can be transmitted (Mutans Streptococci & lactobacilli). A sugary **environment** results in an acid by-product which makes the oral cavity more acidic. Bacteria can then attach to the tooth and form a plaque. A greater length of **time** & an increase in frequency of consuming sugary foods and substances increases risk for oral cavities.

PROPER BRUSHING & FLOSSING

-  Brush your teeth gently. If you are squashing the bristles, you're brushing too hard.
-  Replace your tooth brush every 2–3 months.
-  Be sure you are reaching every tooth.
-  Avoid tooth brushes with hard bristles that can damage gums.
-  Floss gently so you don't damage your gums.
-  Floss your teeth the same way each time so you don't forget any teeth.
-  Wipe babies' mouths with a warm, damp cloth to remove bacteria from their teeth.



PREVENTION TIPS

-  Properly brush teeth, gums and tongue a minimum of twice daily & floss daily (brushing should take 2–3 minutes).
-  If only brushing once a day it is best to do at night, before bedtime.
-  Avoid snacking on foods high in sugar between meals or “sipping” on soda over an extended period of time.
-  Receive oral health care from a dental provider at least once a year (children included).
-  Avoid sharing eating utensils or tooth brushes between people.
-  For children, begin oral hygiene care before teeth erupt & begin brushing after first tooth erupts.
-  Avoid putting a baby to bed with a bottle & avoid dipping pacifiers in sugary substances.
-  Beware of medications that contain sugar (Dimetapp, Advil, Motrin, Vick's)
-  Have child participate in school fluoride mouth rinse programs, dental sealant programs and fluoride varnish application programs if offered.

FLUORIDE

Crawford County lacks fluoridated water in its communities. Fluoride helps to strengthen the teeth and protect them from decay, especially when primary and permanent teeth are forming. Fluoride is safe and it provides benefits that continue for a lifetime. It is also the least expensive and most effective way to reduce tooth decay. Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and help stop cavities that have already started. Fluoride varnish is available through Crawford County Public Health. Please contact Crawford County Public Health at 608-326-0229 or 1-800-207-4774 for more information.



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Lives

Crawford County Public Health

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Why care about Oral Health?

