Eating and Drinking Habits

- Frequently exposing your child’s teeth to sugar will cause cavities.
- Children should consume no more than 120 ml to 175 ml of juice daily.
- Fresh fruits, vegetables and cheese are the best snacks.
- Avoid allowing your child to snack on crackers, cookies, dried fruit or fruit snacks.
- Brush teeth after eating, or rinse with water when brushing is not an option.

Smart Snacking

**Healthy Zone**
- Healthy Snacks
  - Water
  - Fresh fruits
  - Nuts
  - String cheese
  - Fresh vegetables
  - Regular milk
  - Plain popcorn
  - Cold cut meats
  - Cottage cheese

**Cavity Causing Snacks**
- Juice
- Soda
- Candies
- Cookies
- Fruit snacks
- Sports drinks
- Crackers
- Dried fruit snacks

**Breakfast**
- Snack

**Lunch**
- Snack

**Dinner**
- Snack
Caring for Your Child’s Mouth

- Baby teeth are important for chewing, smiling, talking, jaw development and self-esteem.
- Good oral health begins with parents because cavity-causing bacteria inside the parents’ mouths can pass to their children.
- Visit your dentist for regular checkups and keep your own teeth healthy.
- Don’t share with your child things that have been in your own mouth (e.g., utensils, food).
- Look inside your child’s mouth. Check teeth daily for white, brown or black spots.
- Parents should brush their child’s teeth with fluoride toothpaste. Apply a ‘pea-sized’ amount of toothpaste to the brush.
- When the spaces between your child’s teeth close you may begin flossing every day.

Development of the Child’s Mouth

- All children are different, and the age at which their teeth come in varies.
- Children usually begin getting permanent teeth at around 5-6 years of age.
- The bottom front teeth are usually first to appear.
- Around this same time, the first permanent molar will also begin to erupt.
- Primary teeth usually loosen and fall out naturally.
- Sometimes the roots of the primary teeth do not dissolve and they remain intact. If this occurs, schedule a dental visit for your child.

Habits that Affect the Mouth

- Thumb-sucking and the use of pacifiers is normal and acceptable. However, frequent and vigorous sucking can deform your child’s developing mouth.
- Plan to wean children from digit-sucking or pacifiers by 3 years of age.
- If the habits persist, ask a healthcare professional what can be done.

Mouth Injuries

- In this age group accidents involving the teeth and mouth are very common.
- Some injuries can be avoided by padding household furniture (e.g., coffee tables, etc.) when children are small.
- If a baby tooth is knocked out, do not put it back in the child’s mouth. At this age, teeth placed back into the mouth generally do not take and may cause problems later with the permanent teeth.

Fluoride Recommendations

- For tooth brushing, children over 3 years of age can use a ‘pea-sized’ amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day.
- Only children who are at high risk for cavities and consume non-fluoridated water need fluoride supplements.
- Before supplements are prescribed, the healthcare professional must evaluate the fluoride needs of each patient through water testing.

For children younger than 3 years of age, use a ‘smear’ or ‘grain-of-rice sized’ amount of fluoridated toothpaste.

For children aged 3-6 years, use only a ‘pea-sized’ amount.