Fluoride Recommendations

- 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.

Eating and Drinking Habits

- Frequent exposure of your child’s teeth to sugar will cause cavities.
- Children should consume no more than 120 ml to 175 ml of juice daily.
- Avoid allowing your child to snack on crackers, cookies, dried fruit or fruit snacks.
- Have children brush their teeth after eating, or rinse with water when brushing is not an option.
- Chewing sugarless gum, especially those containing xylitol, is a good way to prevent cavities between meals.
- Choose water, not sports drinks, to quench children’s thirst during sports activities.
Caring for Your Child’s Mouth

- Healthy teeth are important for chewing, smiling, talking, jaw development and self-esteem.
- Look inside your child’s mouth. Check teeth daily for white, brown or black spots.
- Until age 8, it is best for parents to ‘finish the job’ after children have brushed their own teeth.
- Children aged 6-12 years may use more than a ‘pea-sized’ amount of fluoridated toothpaste to brush their teeth.
- As children grow, the spaces between the teeth tend to narrow, making plaque removal more challenging.
- Plaque between the teeth may only be removed with flossing. Be sure to assist your child with flossing every day.

Development of your Child’s Mouth

- All children are different, and the age at which baby teeth are lost and permanent teeth come in varies.
- Children usually begin getting permanent teeth at around 5-6 years of age, starting with the bottom front teeth. Around this same time, the first permanent molars will also begin to erupt.
- The child will not begin losing teeth again until about age 10, which is typically when the permanent second molars begin to erupt. By the early teen years, most children have a full complement of permanent teeth.
- 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, have your child examined by a dentist.
- In some cases, children may benefit from early orthodontic treatment while their jaws are still growing.
- Consult a dentist if you have concerns about the way your child’s mouth is developing.

Mouth Injuries

- Accidents and injuries involving the teeth and mouth are very common in this age group, especially when children participate in sports.
- Children should always wear a helmet while bicycling, skateboarding, inline skating and playing sports.
- Talk to your healthcare professional about wearing a mouth guard for sports activities.
- 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.
- If an adult tooth is knocked out, you must act quickly. Pick up the tooth by the crown (the white chewing surface), rinse for about 10 seconds in cold water, and then try to replace the tooth into its socket. If this is not possible, store the tooth in cold milk and see a dentist immediately.