

# Children's Oral Health



## How does oral health affect children?

- One of the most common chronic diseases for children is tooth decay, also known as cavities.
- Cavities are painful and can lead to tooth breakdown. If left untreated, they can cause problems with eating, speaking, and learning.
- Cavities are expensive to fix and lead to missed school and lower grades.

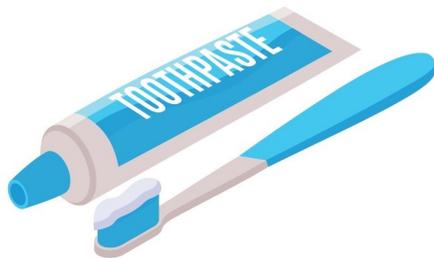
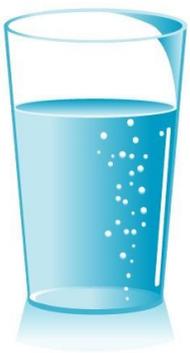


## Chances of cavities are higher if:

- Family members have cavities
- Sugary foods or drinks are eaten often
- Special health care needs (For example, taking medications, dry mouth, etc.)
- Braces, orthodontics, or oral appliances

## Cavities are preventable!

- Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Drink fluoridated water.
- Visit a dental provider at least once a year.
- Ask a dental provider to apply dental sealants.



**Fluoride** is a mineral that protects teeth from decay by rebuilding and strengthening the tooth's surface.

## How can parents help?

- Eat healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables.
- Limit sugars, starches, and unhealthy snacks.
- Help or supervise brushing of teeth to ensure proper amount of toothpaste is used and it isn't swallowed.
- Develop healthy habits early as good oral health promotes well-being that can last a lifetime!



## Check out the numbers!

- Approximately three in five of Wisconsin's third graders have had tooth decay.<sup>1</sup>
- After being applied, dental sealants provide protection against 80% of cavities for two years and 50% for up to four years.<sup>2</sup>
  - In Wisconsin, nearly half of third graders have at least one tooth that could be sealed.<sup>1</sup>



For more information, please visit the Oral Health Program's website: [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health).

1. Elderbrook, M.E., Hang, M., Olson, M.A. (2018). *Healthy Smiles Healthy Growth: Wisconsin's Third-Grade Children*. Wisconsin Oral Health Program, Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Publication number P-00589.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Dental Sealant FAQs*. [https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/dental\\_sealant\\_program/sealants-FAQ.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/dental_sealant_program/sealants-FAQ.htm)