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.
Check out the numbers!

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

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