

Even with the cold weather outside, there's nothing that can warm you up more than a great big smile from someone, especially a child. This month the focus is on dental health. Good dental health is not just important for making your smile beautiful. Your teeth provide structural support for the face muscles, they are part of the digestive system, and they are essential for speech.

Taking care of your teeth helps prevent plaque, a clear film that sticks to your teeth. This, along with the bacteria and food particles left on your teeth, softens the enamel until a hole, or cavity, forms.

It's important to encourage your children to take care of their teeth by following these steps:

- Brush at least twice a day, after breakfast and before bedtime. Brush more often if possible, especially after eating sweet snacks.
- Brushing properly breaks down plaque. Brush all of your teeth, not just the front ones. Spend time on the sides and in the back of your teeth. Spend at least 2-3 minutes brushing. You can use a timer or a favorite song to pass the time.
- Be sure to use a toothbrush with soft bristles and apply only a pea sized amount of toothpaste to the brush. You should get a new toothbrush about every three months.
- Learn how to floss your teeth and do it daily.
- Visit the dentist regularly.
- Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables, and limit the amount of sugary foods you eat.

So, for a lifetime of beautiful smiles, keep brushing!

Maria Farley

Just a reminder... According to our school guidelines, please do not send your child to school if:

*he/she has a fever of 100 or greater, without any use of fever reducing medication

*there is vomiting or diarrhea in past 24 hours

*he/she has a severe head cold or persistent cough

*there is evidence of any suspicious skin rash or contagious disease

Also, please remember to call the Absentee Hotline with each absence, **even if your child was sent home ill**, to ensure the safety of our students.