



Children's Dental Health

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The Dental Departments of the Ryan Network are proud to support National Children's Dental Health Month, February 2008. The Ryan dentists want all children to have healthy teeth and good oral health.

IN ORDER TO HAVE A HEALTHY SMILE, CHILDREN SHOULD:

- **HAVE A DENTAL CHECK-UP AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR.** Your child should have their first dental visit between the ages of 1 and 3. Early examination and preventive care will protect your child's smile now and in the future. The dentist will review your child's medical and dental history, and examine their teeth, gums, and jaws. If necessary, X-rays will be taken to make sure there are no "hidden" health conditions. Regular dental visits help your child stay cavity-free, and give children a better chance of good overall health, because disease in the mouth can affect the rest of the body.
- **HAVE REGULAR TEETH CLEANINGS AND FLUORIDE TREATMENTS.** This will be done during your child's dental check-up visits. The teeth will be cleaned and polished, and a fluoride solution will be applied. Teeth cleanings remove unwanted build-up on the teeth, irritate the gums and cause rotting. Fluoride treatments strengthen teeth and prevent cavities. The dentist will also teach your child how they should be brushing and flossing, leading to cleaner teeth and healthier gums.
- **CHILDREN SHOULD NOT FALL ASLEEP WITH A BOTTLE OF MILK OR JUICE!** Children can get bad tooth decay from using a bottle during naps or at night. If your child **MUST** have a bottle when they nap, it should only contain water. Children should be encouraged to drink from a cup as they approach their first birthday.
- **HAVE DENTAL SEALANTS PLACED ON THE PERMANENT MOLARS.** Sealants are a plastic material that is put on the chewing surfaces of back teeth to prevent cavities. Sealants "seal out" food and plaque, reducing the risk of decay. Sealants should be placed on the permanent first molars shortly after these teeth come in, at about six years of age, and on the permanent second molars at about 12 years old. Ask your dentist about sealants!



ALSO, BEWARE OF FREQUENT SNACKING; HAVE YOUR CHILD(REN) BRUSH TWICE A DAY WITH A FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE, AND FLOSS ONCE A DAY.