

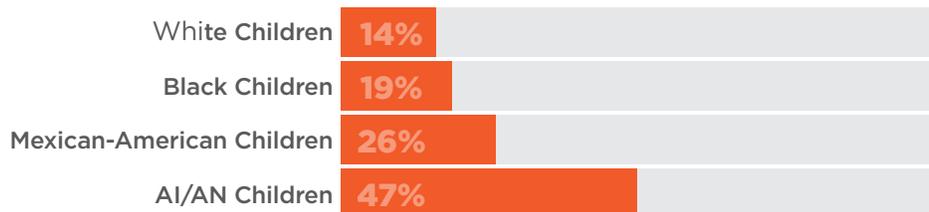
Ways to protect teeth and prevent decay in school-age kids and teens



OUR COMMUNITY

School-aged youth in American Indian and Alaskan Native communities are **disproportionately affected** by poor oral health.

Percentage of Children Ages 6 to 8 With Untreated Dental Caries in Their Permanent Teeth:



Here Are Some Steps You Can Take to Care for Your Child's Teeth and Mouth:



It begins with their baby (primary) teeth!

To grow up healthy, your kids need healthy teeth!

- Make brushing teeth part of the morning and bedtime routine. Use fluoride toothpaste.
- As kids get older, let them use their own toothbrush. You should squeeze the toothpaste and help brush until they are 6-8 years old.
- Make an appointment for your child to see the dentist every 6 months.



Adult (permanent) teeth

- Baby teeth begin to fall out around 6 years old.
- Brush twice every day with fluoride toothpaste and floss teeth.
- Ask your child's doctor or dentist to put fluoride varnish on their teeth to prevent cavities.
- Ask the dentist about sealants once molars come in.



Water is best!

Sugary drinks are behind the rise in children with diabetes (high blood sugar) and unhealthy weight.

Replace sugary drinks like soda pop, juice, sweet tea, energy drinks, and sports drinks with water with fluoride, a mineral that helps prevent cavities.

Tap Water

Most tap water contains fluoride, but most bottled water does not. If you have questions about your tap water, contact your tribal, local,

county, or state health department to learn about the amount of fluoride in your tap water.

Well Water

Well water should be tested regularly to ensure it is safe to drink. At the same time, it can be tested to make sure it does not have too much or too little fluoride. Testing is available through most state or county public health departments.



Help your kids eat a healthy diet

- Include fresh fruits or vegetables at meals whenever you can.
- Limit sugary snacks and candy by offering fruit instead.
- Replace starchy snacks like pretzels and chips by offering veggies or cheese.
- Avoid snacking on candy, cookies, or chips!



HPV

Cancer of the mouth and throat, and other diseases caused by HPV (human papillomavirus) can be prevented with the HPV vaccine. Do you have preteen or teen kids in your home? Get your kids – both girls and boys – this vaccine when they are 11 or 12 years old to prevent cancer.



Smoking, vaping and chewing tobacco are bad for your mouth

- Encourage your child or teenager to avoid commercial tobacco products of all types. They expose you, and the people around you, to chemicals to chemicals that cause cancer in the lips, cheeks, gums, and lungs. Smokers are twice as likely to lose their teeth as non-smokers. This includes:
 - » Cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos
 - » E-cigarettes and vape (JUUL) products
 - » Smokeless or chewing tobacco
- All these products can lead to a lifetime of addiction. It's just better to never start.

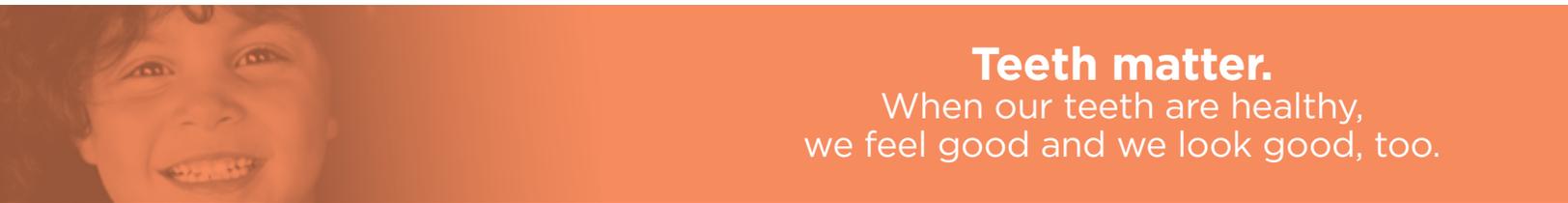


Sports

Kids who play sports, even informal recreational activities, should wear mouthguards. Ask your doctor or dentist for more information.

Kids learn by watching the people around them. Show them that you brush your teeth, drink water, and eat healthy foods, too! Be the role model who eats healthy food and doesn't use commercial tobacco products.

(Source: Phipps KR and Ricks TL. The oral health of American Indian and Alaska Native children aged 6-9 years: results of the 2016-2017 HIS oral health survey. Indian Health Service data brief. Rockville, MD: Indian Health Service. 2017.)



Teeth matter.
When our teeth are healthy,
we feel good and we look good, too.

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