



**PRESS RELEASE
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Brush Up on Healthy Teeth!

First 5 Yolo's Tips on Keeping Your Child's Teeth Healthy

Woodland, CA — According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, nearly 50 percent of children have tooth decay before age 5. It is estimated American students miss more than 51 million school hours annually because of dental problems or related conditions. Germs originating in the mouth can cause diseases that infect other areas of a child's body.

“Because young children's teeth are very important for eating and speaking clearly and can impact overall health,” said Julie Gallelo, executive director of First 5 Yolo, “helping a child maintain a proper dental care routine is key to his or her overall development.”

First 5 Yolo encourages parents and caregivers to begin taking care of their children's teeth and gums early by following these helpful tips:

- Gently wipe your baby's gums with a clean, wet cloth after each feeding.
- As soon as your child's first tooth comes in, begin a brushing routine every day.
- Brush your toddler's teeth for him or her until the age of 6 years old.
- Look for toothbrushes with soft bristles that are gentle on gums.
- To make brushing more fun, use a brightly colored toothbrush. Ask your child to roar like a tiger to ensure his or her mouth is wide open!
- Ask a dentist or doctor if it's okay to use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste once a child is 2 or 3 years old.
- Supervise and teach your child to spit out toothpaste and rinse after brushing. Instruct children not to swallow the toothpaste.
- Floss teeth as soon as they begin to touch each other — usually when a child is about 4 years old.
- Monitor what your child eats, as it can affect his or her dental health. Avoid candy and sugary drinks like soda that can cause cavities.
- Prevent tooth decay by limiting the amount of time your child sucks on a bottle or “sippy” cup filled with milk or juice. If he or she needs a bottle at bedtime, fill it with water.
- Visit the dentist for a check-up when the child's first tooth comes in and every year after that.
- Fluoride is an important factor for developing stronger teeth and preventing decay. For children who don't drink fluoridated water, check with your dentist about possible fluoride treatments.

- Dentists can apply a safe and protective fluoride varnish to the teeth of young children. A recent study found that 1-year-olds who had this treatment twice a year were four times less likely to get cavities in their baby teeth.

“By practicing good dental habits early in a child’s life and visiting the dentist regularly,” said Gallelo, “parents can help keep children’s teeth healthy and their smiles sparkling!”

For more information about healthy child development and information on First 5 Yolo’s programs, services and resources, please visit www.first5yolo.org.

About First 5 Yolo

Research shows a child’s brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child’s growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. In November 1998, California voters passed a statewide ballot initiative to add a 50-cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes. The funds collected are utilized to fund education, health and childcare programs that promote early childhood development from prenatal through age 5. For more information about First 5 Yolo, please visit www.First5Yolo.org.

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