

5 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD CARE FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S TEETH LIKE THEIR LIVES DEPEND ON IT!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tooth decay is one of the most common, yet preventable diseases in children. Of children 2–5 years old, 28 percent have already had decay in their baby teeth. Many parents don't realize the importance of baby teeth because, after all, at some point they will fall out to make way for permanent teeth. Baby teeth have a huge impact on oral health, emotional health and general health. Here is why it's imperative to get your child off to a good start with pediatric dental care:

1. Plaque Hurts Hearts

Consider this: If your child doesn't take care of his/her teeth as early as three years old, it could affect heart health over the long term. According to the American Heart Association, the plaque that builds up on teeth and gums can be directly linked to heart disease, diabetes and dementia. Visiting your pediatric dentist as soon as the first baby teeth erupt and then every six months for a cleaning and evaluation can help in reducing bacteria in the mouth that can enter the bloodstream and trigger inflammation, which is a risk factor for heart attack and strokes later in life.

2. Flossing Adds Years to Life

Studies have shown that flossing every day can increase life expectancy. Children should start flossing as soon as they have teeth next to each other. It takes education and instruction from an early age to get children conditioned to floss. Dr. Michael F. Roizen states in his book *Real Age*, that flossing can add six years to your life. Has your child flossed today?

3. Cavities Do More Damage Than You Think

In children, cavities can form in as little as a few weeks because baby teeth are thinner, and an untreated cavity can quickly reach the tooth's nerve causing more damage and pain. Sadly, many children do not complain so some parents are unaware of this. However, there are critical consequences of a child's cavity. Many suffer from malnutrition and bad breath, and an astonishing 33% of children with toothaches suffer from sleep deprivation affecting their behavior, appetite and ability to pay attention in school leading to bad grades. An untreated cavity can also lead to infection that can potentially cause hospitalization or in some cases death. A premature loss of a

Do your kids 'beg' to go to the dentist? Ask The Super Dentists' parents; their kids do!

baby tooth can result in speech impediments, loss of space for permanent teeth and malformation of bite that could shift the shape of the entire jaw and face.

4. Smiling Affects Confidence and Self-Esteem

We want our children to be physically healthy and we want to ensure they are emotionally healthy too. You don't want your child to be teased or bullied due to the appearance of their teeth, which can be easily fixed. When a child doesn't like his/her smile, self-esteem suffers. According to the International Council for Self-Esteem, there is a close relationship between low self-esteem and serious issues ranging from teenage pregnancies to suicides. Studies show that people who smile often are more likely to live happier, longer lives. Smiling makes us more attractive, and it relieves stress and helps boost our immune system due to the endorphins, natural painkillers and serotonin that are released. A smile shows confidence that can help lead to personal and professional successes throughout life.

5. To fear or to love? That is the question

The top 3 fears? Death, public speaking and visiting the dentist. An estimated 30-40 million Americans have dental phobia, and 36% of people don't visit the dentist regularly because of fear usually established in their childhood. Many parents don't realize that dental care has changed dramatically since they were kids, especially in a dental office designed for children. Your children never have to know that feeling of dreading the dentist; in fact they may even beg you for a visit!