

# WE NEED A HERO!

Your child needs a tooth hero and it's you! As a role model for your family, your child looks up to you for guidance and support. Due to the large amount of decay your child has, lifestyle changes are now necessary. Please share this information with family members, daycare providers, and anyone else who plays an important role in your child's life.

Your child will need you to brush for them until they are around seven years old. Although they want to be independent, they do not have the dexterity to do a good enough job on their own. Let them brush first and then take over to finish the brushing.

Floss your child's teeth every night before bedtime. They will need help flossing until they are around ten years old.

Juices, Gatorade, Powerade, and Soda are not good drink choices for your child. They contain large amounts of both sugar and acids that cause cavities. Milk (any flavor) and water are the only suitable drink choices for a child with high dental decay.

Snacking between meals also causes cavities. If your child is a "grazer", limit the amount of foods that are high in carbohydrates and sugars in between meals. Cavity-causing snacks include, but are not limited to, crackers, chips, cereal, snack cakes, bread, cookies, candy, raisins, fruit snacks, etc. Good snacks include lunch meat, hot dogs, nuts, cheese, fresh veggies, yogurt, popcorn, sugar free pudding and Jell-O.

The most important thing to remember is that dental disease can be significantly reduced if you maintain your child's dental cleanings and exams. Fixing your child's decay at this time is not a cure-all. Studies show that children with several cavities in their baby teeth grow into adults with several cavities if they do not maintain a twice yearly relationship with their dentist. If visits are kept and future cavities are found, they will be small enough to treat easily and prevent the dental disease from spreading to other areas.