

Fidelis Care Reinforces Importance of Dental Care for Children - Feb. 23, 2023

Health Plan Provides Tips for Parents during National Children's Dental Health Month

LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y., Feb. 23, 2023 [PRNewswire/](#) -- February is [National Children's Dental Health Month](#), a yearly observance during which health professionals promote the benefits of good oral health for children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [cavities are one of the most common chronic diseases during childhood](#) and can be harmful to children's overall health. Educating parents and children about the importance of good dental habits can help prevent cavities and improve overall health outcomes.

"Promoting good oral hygiene is the best way to ensure children's dental health. Regular dental checkups, along with brushing and flossing, prevent plaque, cavities, and tooth decay," said Dr. Vincent Marchello, Fidelis Care Chief Medical Officer. "It's important for parents and guardians to take an active role in their children's oral hygiene."

Left untreated, cavities can lead to infections that may impact eating, speaking, playing, and learning. Children who have poor oral health often [miss more school and receive lower grades](#) than other children. Regular visits to the dentist help ensure any dental problems can be addressed early during their exam. The checkup also usually includes a cleaning and a fluoride treatment if needed.

"Fluoride helps to prevent tooth decay and is very important for children. In-office fluoride treatments are recommended as soon as your child's baby teeth erupt, which is around six months," added Annette Maggi, DMD, FAAPD, Assistant Clinical Professor at University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine. "Children should receive fluoride treatments regularly. And very importantly, fluoride is safe and highly effective in preventing tooth decay."

The University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine is among the many excellent dental providers that treat Fidelis Care members. Fidelis Care partners with UB Dental on various outreach initiatives including their mobile dental clinic, which is committed to improving the health and well-being of Western New York's most underserved communities.

At home, parents and guardians can follow the following advice for good oral hygiene:

- **For Babies:**

- **Begin dental hygiene as soon as possible.** Before teeth even appear, a baby's mouth should be cleaned twice a day – after first feeding and before bed – by wiping the gums with a clean washcloth to remove bacteria and sugar. Avoid putting a baby to bed with a bottle of milk. Milk or juices can pool around teeth and cause severe decay.
- **Brush regularly.** Once teeth come in, a baby's teeth should be brushed twice a day with a small, soft-bristled toothbrush and water. Talk to a dentist or pediatrician about using fluoride-based toothpaste and receiving a fluoride application on a baby's teeth.
- **Go to the dentist.** By the baby's first birthday, they should visit with a dentist to spot any potential problems.

- **For Children:**

- **Brush twice a day.** Encourage children to brush their teeth at least twice a day – in the morning and right before bed – using fluoride toothpaste.
- **Brush properly and don't forget your tongue.** Poor brushing can be just as bad as not brushing at all. Children should take their time and use gentle, circular motions as well as gently brush their tongue.
- **Don't forget to floss.** Flossing once a day is a great way to stimulate the gums and reduce plaque.
- **Consider using mouthwash.** Mouthwash can help reduce acid in the mouth, clean hard-to-brush areas, and strengthen the teeth. A dentist can provide specific mouthwash recommendations for children.
- **Visit the dentist regularly.** Children should see the dentist at least twice a year for cleanings and checkups. The dentist can help remove plaque and look for cavities, and spot for potential oral health issues.

- **For Caregivers:**

- **Model good brushing habits.** Brush your teeth with your children to encourage proper brushing technique and habits.
- **Avoid sugary foods and drinks.** Set a good example for children that highlights the importance of good dietary habits.

About Fidelis Care Fidelis Care is a mission-driven health plan offering quality, affordable coverage for children and adults of all ages and at all stages of life. With more than 2.5 million members statewide, Fidelis Care believes that all New Yorkers should have access to affordable, quality health insurance. Follow us on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/fidelis-care](https://www.linkedin.com/company/fidelis-care), on Twitter at [@fideliscare](https://twitter.com/fideliscare), Instagram at [@fideliscare](https://www.instagram.com/fideliscare), and on Facebook at [facebook.com/fideliscare](https://www.facebook.com/fideliscare). For more information, call Fidelis Care at 1-888-FIDELIS (1-888-343-3547) or visit [fideliscare.org](https://www.fideliscare.org).

Contact: MediaInquiries@fideliscare.org

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