

Importance of Tooth Brushing in Pediatrics - A Short Review

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ABSTRACT

A poor oral hygiene or any oral disease affects the oral health and then ultimately the general health of a person which in return influences the overall appearance of a person. Thus it is very important to take a good care of oral health. Oral hygiene is the practice of keeping the mouth clean and healthy by brushing and flossing to prevent gum diseases and tooth decay. It is done in order to prevent the plaque and food deposit on tooth thus to prevent caries and cavities.

Keywords: Oral hygiene, Oral health, Tooth decay

“You don’t have to brush your teeth — just the ones you want to keep.”

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INTRODUCTION

Good oral hygiene should start at an earlier age than what is generally believed. And more important is to start taking care of oral care from childhood, along with acquiring habits for its maintenance; it is something that allows adults to keep their teeth healthy throughout their lifetime [1].

Teaching the child a proper oral care at a young age is an investment in his or her health that will pay lifelong dividends. By taking a good care of their own teeth, one can send a message that maintaining good oral health is actually is of great value [2].

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends that infants should consult the dentist within 6 months of getting their first tooth or by their first birthday [3]. The American Dental Association (ADA) also recommends bringing baby to the dentist as soon as the first tooth appears in oral cavity and no later than the child’s first birthday. This visit gives dentist a chance for a closer look and to check for tooth decay and discuss other conditions or habits, such as thumb sucking that may affect the teeth in later stages. The dentist also can show how to clean baby’s teeth properly [4]. After every feeding, a clean, warm wash cloth should be used to gently cleanse the inside of the mouth [5]. Oral tissues should be regularly checked by the parents for any breach or trauma [2].

It is recommended to visit dentist regularly, based on the child’s oral health [3]. By taking proper measure one can maintain good oral hygiene:

- I. First step in maintenance of oral hygiene is the selection of a good tooth brush: There are several factors that one should consider when choosing a toothbrush but the main ones are [2]:
 - A soft bristled toothbrush should be chosen as they are flexible which can easily reaches to all areas of the teeth even the hard to reach areas.
 - Soft bristles tooth brushes, doesn’t cause bruising of gums and wear and tear of teeth.
 - The head of the brush should be small so that it can effectively clean all the areas of the teeth.
 - The handle of the tooth brush should be of comfortable gripping by the user.

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Toothbrushes should be replaced in the following circumstances [6]:

- After every 3 months of use, toothbrush should be replaced by a new one.
- After a cold or illness, tooth brush should be changed immediately.
- When the bristles lose their shape, change the tooth brush.

II. Secondly, selecting the good toothpaste:

- Toothpaste is a valuable adjunct to a toothbrush in oral hygiene, but it is the correct brushing action that removes the plaque from your teeth [7].
- Most toothpaste contains fluoride, which helps to prevent and control cavities. A tube of fluoride toothpaste contains fluoride (1000 to 1500 ppm). It's important to use one with the right concentration of fluoride for your child b [8].

III. Flossing [2]:

- It should be started once any two of child's teeth comes in contact with each other. Due to tight contacts, sometimes food get caught between the teeth, thus flossing helps in removal of lodged food particles hence preventing cavities by removing plaque.
- Children should be able to floss their own teeth by the time they are 9 years old.

Other important measure to prevent tooth decay:

- To rinse well with plain water after every meal especially after sweets.
- To brush at least twice a day.
- As soon as first sign of caries is noticed, should see family dentist immediately.
- Do visit a dentist in every 6 months.

IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HEALTH

A good oral health and its maintenance are as important as one's looks or wearing branded clothes or having good food. It does affect your overall look and your quality of life. Having cavities, crooked or missing teeth or mal-aligned jaws may interfere with your speech or with chewing food, which may lead to diminished quality of life. If one does not take care of these cavities or crooked or missing teeth in initial stages, later it may require expensive and painful corrective procedures which again affect you emotionally and financially. So, it's an advice to start taking care of your teeth and mouth from young age so that later you do not have to suffer. Healthy smile will make you and keep you healthy too.

IMPACT OF ORAL HEALTH ON GENERAL HEALTH

Keeping good oral health is also very essential for good general health. A mouth is a "Mirror" to the rest of the body, providing signals of various general health disorders. For e.g. in HIV infection, the very first sign appears in oral cavity, ulcers in mouth showcase stress or constipation in a person, likewise bleeding gums may indicate Blood disorders. So there, are more other various systemic diseases and infections which shows there first signs in oral cavity for e.g. Diabetes, Skeletal Osteoporosis, Anorexia, etc.

Even saliva plays an important role in the defense mechanism of body as it contains various anti-bodies to attack and fight against varieties of bacteria's and viruses.

Thus, Oral cavity has a direct impact on overall general health. Poor oral health not only affects the general health instead also affect the lifestyle, overall look and confidence of a person.

Both oral health and general health are interlinked to each other. Keeping and practicing to maintain good oral hygiene daily is the investment in your overall health not just for a day or two but for the future too.

CONCLUSION

Dentists plays an important role in the primary prevention of dental problems in young children through preventive treatments, risk assessment, and anticipatory guidance for parents regarding oral development, caries prevention, and overall oral health [9]. Recommendations for at-home preventive measures, including brushing of infants' and young children's teeth and using fluoride toothpaste, are key elements of anticipatory guidance to be provided to parents by the child's dental home [10].

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