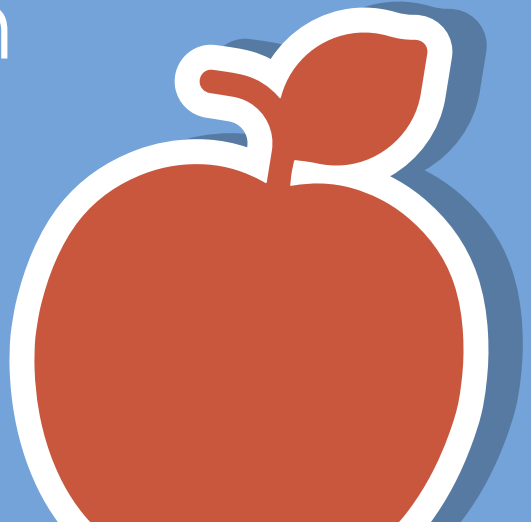




# Oral Health Education for School-Aged Children



# Cambridge Healthy Smiles Program



Dental decay remains the most common chronic disease among children. Children experience unnecessary discomfort from tooth decay, which limits their eating, talking, and learning. Poor oral health will affect a child's overall health. The good news about tooth decay is that it is preventable with good oral hygiene, proper diet, and regular six month visits to the dentist for cleanings, fluoride, and sealants.



The Cambridge Healthy Smiles program provides free dental screenings and in-class oral health education for all preschool, 1st, 3rd, 6th, and 9th grade students in Cambridge Public Schools. Cambridge Healthy Smiles has been enormously successful in identifying Cambridge children at risk for dental disease and referral for treatment to local dental offices in Cambridge. The program's goal is to reach all students through a curriculum that adapts to age level and reflects student diversity.

Increased oral health awareness will lead to improved overall health for the students and their families.

The school nurses play an important role working with the school dental hygienist. The Healthy Smiles program hopes all of our students strive for good oral hygiene which will contribute to a successful school year.



# CPS School Dental Screenings



Our program performs a complementary Oral Health Screening for your child at their school. The screening results help us to be aware of the oral health of each student with hopes to improve the overall health of all the students in Cambridge Public Schools.

All **first, third, sixth, and ninth graders** in CPS are scheduled for a yearly oral health classroom lesson followed by an oral health dental screening. The oral health lesson is presented in the classroom the week before the screening, which helps the children become comfortable with the dental staff before the dental screening. On the day of the lesson, children are sent home with a toothbrush bag with a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, and an oral hygiene education information for parents to read with age-specific oral health recommendations.

All students participate as a class, and children feel included when they come in for their two minute dental screening. Children are encouraged to ask dental questions during their exam. Our oral health screening will provide an exam of the teeth and mouth of each child.

**This simple and non-invasive exam is done by using a dental mirror.** Dental decay can go unnoticed in its early stages, which is why this screening is completed by trained dental professionals. Parents with students found in need of dental care are sent a follow-up referral. The Healthy Smiles program will help families find a dentist. Even if your child has a dentist, there are benefits to allowing your child to participate with his/her class in the Healthy Smiles Screening to improve the overall health of your child's school.



# School Dental Screening Findings



Dental problems can be hidden, a child keeps their mouth closed so adults cannot see the pain or problem. An oral screening will identify a child in need. It has been proven that a child that experiences pain:

- Cannot pay attention in class, distracted due to discomfort.
- Cannot learn to their fullest capacity, cannot absorb.
- Have limited ability to do well on a test.

The screening provides a snapshot of the population, helping to make an overall population assessment. An oral health screening can identify the problem correctly and find a resolution by making a proper referral. The screening will identify a need and begin the process toward a healthy mouth for all CPS children.



# Early Education



Among the many important preparations for the school day is maintaining a healthy mouth. Dental decay remains the most common chronic disease among children. Children experience unnecessary pain and suffering from tooth decay.

The good news about tooth decay is that it is preventable when eating a healthy diet, having good oral hygiene habits and maintaining routine dental care with fluoride and sealants. It is important starting in the preschool and early grades for your child to learn about the importance of a healthy mouth.

## Importance of a Healthy Mouth:

Teeth help us eat, speak, sing, and smile.

Healthy gums and bone help hold teeth in place.

Cheeks, lips, and palate are essential for chewing and speaking.

The tongue helps us speak and taste foods.

Baby teeth hold space in the jaw for permanent teeth developing under the gums.

Baby teeth extracted (removed) too early can cause permanent teeth to be misaligned.

Foods are divided into sticky or crunchy for their effect on teeth, when in the mouth do they clean teeth or do they stick on teeth and feed the plaque, encouraging a cavity?

Rinse with water after eating when you do not have a brush.

This washes away food and plaque (mouth germs).



Brushing and flossing both the primary (baby) and permanent teeth is important to protect and maintain healthy teeth. Flossing helps remove food and bacteria from between the teeth and places the toothbrush cannot reach. Good oral health means brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste before school and before bedtime. Please encourage your child to make brushing and flossing a daily habit. Good oral care will aid your child in germ prevention.



# Elementary Education



It is important for your child in their elementary years to learn about how a cavity forms and healthy food choices to maintain a healthy mouth and body.

## The Tooth Decay Process

Plaque (mouth bacteria) around teeth use food particles to make acid.

Frequent eating or snacking causes too many acid attacks.

Acid attacks break down the enamel structure of the tooth leading to tooth decay

Decay will continue to spread deep into the tooth structure and cause a cavity (hole) if the decay process goes unchecked by a dentist.

Foods are divided into sticky or crunchy for their effect on teeth, when in the mouth do they clean teeth or do they stick on teeth and feed the plaque, encouraging a cavity?

Rinse with water after eating when you do not have a brush.  
This washes away food and plaque.

The above topics are important to discuss at home as well as in school. Please encourage your child to make brushing and flossing a daily habit. It is recommended that your child see a dentist for an oral exam and cleaning twice a year to prevent dental problems that would not allow your student to learn to his or her fullest capacity.



# Sip, Swish, Swallow



## Water Bottle Classroom Initiative: Why Water?

Cambridge Public fluoridated water is the best beverage for maintaining your oral health. Students cannot brush their teeth at school so drinking water is the next best alternative.

Water helps rinse away plaque and cavity causing acid.

Water helps to rinse away food source for plaque to eat.

Water with fluoride strengthens teeth.

Water hydrates children and keeps children healthy.

## Sip, Swish, Swallow.

Encouraging water bottles for classroom use, teaches a student that drinking water is good for your mouth and body, keeping you healthy. Healthy students learn better.

The water bottles given out in **1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms** for the Healthy Smiles Initiative are provided by the Charles Bullock Trust Fund which supports the oral health needs of school aged children in Cambridge.



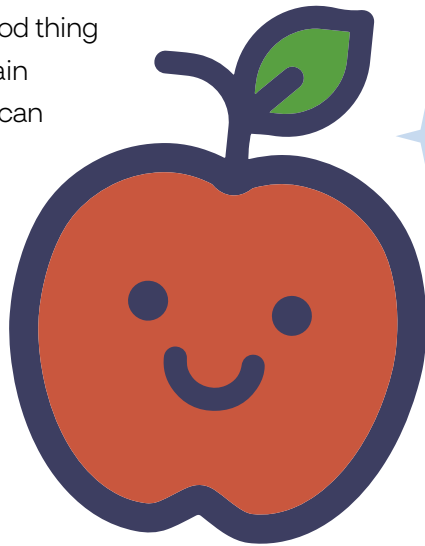


### Dental Healthy Foods and Snacks at School

Choose fruits and vegetables for lunches or snacks that are crunchy and help clean teeth as you eat and are low in sugar. It is the next best thing to brushing your teeth.


Milk, and other dairy products such as cheese and yogurt, are low in sugar, which is a good thing for your dental health. Plus, they contain protein and are full of calcium, which can help to strengthen your teeth.


Crackers, chips, and breads stick to teeth once introduced in the mouth on teeth, which feeds the cavity. Eating a crunchy fruit or vegetable, water after, will help clean teeth.




# Healthy Teeth, Healthy You While At School





 Sip, Swish and Swallow with water after **all** snacks and after lunch.

 Bring **healthy snacks** to school that don't stick to your teeth and will clean your teeth, too.

 Drink **water** during the school day to keep healthy.

 Keep your **hands** (germs) out of your mouth.

 Wiggle your loose tooth with your **tongue**.

 **Tell your teacher** if a tooth or your mouth bothers you.

**Sip  
Swish  
Swallow**



Cambridge  
Public Health  
Department



# Preteen Education



Your preteen will be making choices that influence their oral health and will affect their overall health. There are more risk factors that they may be exposed to and will need to make informed good choices.

## The Mouth is Important to the Body

Importance of Maintaining a healthy, low sugar diet, and limiting frequent snacking.

Importance of Brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and flossing before school and bedtime. This is especially important for those with orthodontics.

Awareness of personal oral hygiene, bad breath, and limiting the exposure to germs causing illness.

Avoid Risk Factors- tobacco, vaping, alcohol and illicit drugs.

Importance of drinking water at school, after lunch for dental health and to keep hydrated.

Importance of wearing protective gear such as Mouth

Guard, face protector and helmets for sports activities.

The above topics are important to discuss at home as well as in school. Please encourage your child to make brushing and flossing a daily habit. It is recommended that your child see a dentist for an oral exam and cleaning twice a year to prevent dental problems that would not allow your student to learn to his or her fullest capacity.



# Teenage Education



Teenagers are ready to understand the importance of a healthy mouth and be responsible for their personal hygiene. The list below includes some of the topics that will be discussed with your child.

## Keep your Teeth for Life:

How oral health affects the whole body.

The tooth decay process.

Importance of Maintaining a healthy, low sugar diet, and limiting frequent snacking.

Importance of routine brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and flossing.

Awareness of personal oral hygiene, bad breath, and limiting the exposure to germs causing illness.

Avoid Risk Factors- tobacco- smoking and vaping, alcohol and illicit drugs.

Importance of drinking water at school, after lunch for dental health and to keep hydrated.





Importance of wearing protective gear such as mouth guards and helmets for sports activities to prevent tooth damage and concussions.

Importance of establishing a dental home.

The above topics are important to discuss at home as well as in school. Please encourage your child to make brushing and flossing a daily habit. It is recommended that your child see a dentist for an oral exam and cleaning twice a year to prevent dental problems that would not allow your student to learn to his or her fullest capacity.

## Choose Water as your Drink, it will help you Think!



### Water Bottle Classroom Initiative: Why Water?

Cambridge Public fluoridated water is the best beverage for maintaining your oral health. Students cannot brush their teeth at school so drinking water is the next best alternative.



Water helps rinse away plaque and cavity causing acid.

Water helps to rinse away food source for plaque to eat.

Water with fluoride strengthens teeth

Water hydrates children and keeps children healthy.

### Sip, Swish, Swallow.

Encouraging water bottles for classroom use, teaches a student that drinking water is good for your mouth and body, keeping you healthy. Healthy students learn better.

The water bottles given out in **6<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms** for the Healthy Smiles Initiative are provided by the Charles Bullock Trust Fund which supports the oral health needs of school aged children in Cambridge.

### Dental Healthy Foods and Habits at School

Choose fruits and vegetables for lunches or snacks. Include calcium in your diet - Milk, and dairy products such as cheese and yogurt. Keep your body's immune system strong with good personal oral hygiene, brush and floss your teeth twice a day. Remember to wear a mouth guard for protection and wash and store it properly between sporting events. Avoid high sugar Sports drinks, instead choose water to hydrate while playing your sport.





# Good Oral Health Leads to Good Overall Health



How to help your sick child with the flu or cold to keep their mouth healthy!

Maintain your child's daily oral health care routine even when they are sick.

- Brush two times a day.
- Floss at night or morning.
- Replace brush when feeling better.

How your mouth is hurt when you are sick:

- Nasal sprays, cough and cold medicine can make a mouth dry
- Vomit can hurt your teeth because it is acidic.
- Germs from your cough and mouth can make the rest of your body and others sick.

How to Help with Dry Mouth

- Drink Lots of Water!
- Swish and spit with water after vomiting.
- Use a Humidifier or Vaporizer to help the dry air in the winter to stop dry mouth.
- If your child is old enough for cough drops – sugarless cough drops (Like Xylitol) are recommended..



Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate when Sick!

Water – keeps a child hydrated and washes away cavity-causing acids. If drinks below are recommended by your physician- follow with water to wash away sugars on teeth.

- Pedialyte- replace fluids and minerals.
- Sugar-free sports drinks can give child an energy boost.
- Low-sugar juice can be consumed in moderation.



# Oral Health Tips During COVID-19



Maintain your daily oral health care routine, even when you are sick.

Here are a few health recommendations to help keep your mouth healthy. ALWAYS wash your hands before you start to brush.

Brush twice a day with a soft-bristled brush that can reach all areas of your mouth easily.

Use an American Dental Association (ADA) accepted fluoride toothpaste.

Brush top, bottom, front, back, inside, and outside of all teeth.

Brush gums and teeth in circular motion, like a massage.

Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste for adults and children over 3 years old.

Brush for two minutes.

Brush your tongue.

Floss once a day. If you have not been flossing every day, now is the time to start. Flossing cleans food and germs from between your teeth. Here's how to floss:

Pull 18 to 24 inches of dental floss from the floss dispenser.

Wrap the ends of the floss around your index and middle fingers.

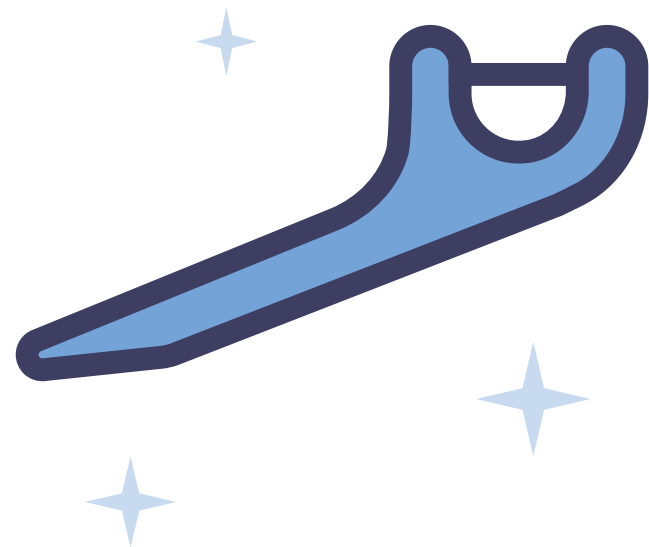


Hold the floss tightly around each tooth in a C shape; move the floss up and down against the side of each tooth a few times.

A floss holder can be used if you are having trouble using the floss or flossing a child's teeth.

Throw away the floss or flosser after each use and wash your hands.

Mouthwash will not prevent the COVID-19 virus, but it will help to kill germs that can cause a mouth to be unhealthy. Rinse with an ADA approved antimicrobial mouthwash for age 12 and over.



## TIPS During COVID (2)



### Prevent germs from spreading

Rinse your toothbrush thoroughly after every brushing, using hot water

After rinsing your toothbrush, keep it upright and let it dry. Let your brush air-dry before putting it away. Store your toothbrush separately, not touching other family brushes.

Avoid spreading germs by giving each member of the family his or her own toothpaste tube and floss container.

If you are sick—or get sick—, replace your toothbrush when you feel better. Be sure to replace toothbrushes at least every three months

Do not forget to keep your removable dental appliances clean (such as retainers or dentures). Brush them as well and follow protocol recommended by your dental office for storage.

Throw away the floss or flosser after each use and wash hands.

### Hydrate with Cambridge fluoridated tap water

Water is the best drink for maintaining your oral health. Drinking water is good for your mouth and body, keeping you healthy. Cambridge tap water contains fluoride, which is called “nature’s cavity fighter.”



## TIPS During COVID (3)



### Dental-healthy snacks

Keep healthy snacks that are low in sugar and don’t stick to your teeth. Limit the number of times you or your child eat snacks each day. Being at home has one advantage; you can always brush your teeth after eating!

### Habits to avoid that may cause dental problems

Avoid risky habits that are not good for your oral health and may also increase your chances of getting or recovering from COVID-19. These risky habits include:

- Vaping/E-cigarettes/Juuling
- Alcohol abuse
- Tobacco smoking
- Drug abuse

### Special considerations for people with pre-existing health conditions

Very careful home dental care is important for those with underlying medical conditions who are at a higher risk for gum disease. These conditions include diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and others that can compromise your immune system. People with these conditions are also at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

### Call your dental office

If you feel you have a dental emergency, call your dental office immediately, and they will advise you on the best treatment.



# Cambridge Healthy Smiles Dental Survey



## Why you should you go to your dental appointment during the pandemic?

The Cambridge Healthy Smiles Program is part of the school health department at CPS. We provide dental screenings and oral health education in the Cambridge Public Schools for all first, third, sixth, and ninth graders. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when dental screenings will not be conducted at your child's school, the Healthy Smiles staff will be calling families to ask a few questions about dental health to help keep you safe.

## During the survey, we will take the time to make sure all parent questions are answered.

- Does your child have a dental home?
- Have you been able to see your Dentist during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Do you have any concerns or fears about returning to your dentist?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we recommend your family continue to see your dentist for preventative routine visits to help keep your family safe. Please continue good oral health practices which are essential for good overall health. Whether learning in-school or virtually, a child's ability to learn increases with good oral health. We recommend that you continue see your dentist routinely to keep your family healthy and safe from COVID-19. Please remember dentistry has been equipped and trained to have the best infection control for decades. It has never been a source of a respiratory infection or viral spread. See your Dentist to maintain good oral health for your overall health.



# Oral Health Resources



## Dental School Services Available for Cambridge Children

### Harvard School of Dental Medicine

(617) 432-1434

188 Longwood Ave, Boston, MA 02115

### Tufts University School of Dental Medicine

(617) 636-6828

1 Kneeland St, Boston, MA 02111

### Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

(617) 638-4700

100 E Newton St, Boston, MA 02118

### Forsyth School for Dental Hygiene

(617)278-2700 (Cleanings and Radiographs only)

179 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA

## Mass Health Dental Insurance

To find local dentists in Cambridge who participate in State Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) and Medicaid visit: [InsureKidsNow.gov](http://InsureKidsNow.gov) or 1-877-KIDS-NOW

### Cambridge Hospital Health Insurance Assistance Office

617-665-1100





### Community Health Centers

To find **local Community Health Centers** with Dental Clinics: visit:  
<http://www.massleague.org/findahealthcenter/>

#### Windsor Street Dental Clinic

(617) 665-3990

Cambridge Health Alliance Windsor Street Health Center  
119 Windsor St. Cambridge, MA 02139

### Oral Health Awareness


To learn more about **oral health recommendations** for your child  
visit websites:

America's Academy of Pediatric Dentists  
<http://www.mychildrensteeth.org>

American Dental Association MouthHealthy  
<https://www.mouthhealthy.org>







**“  
Healthy Teeth,  
Healthy You!  
”**

If you have further questions, please contact:

The Cambridge Healthy Smiles Program  
The Oral Health Program in Cambridge Public Schools

Tel: 617-665-3767 | [healthysmiles@challiance.org](mailto:healthysmiles@challiance.org)



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