

West Haven Department of Public Health



Health Links



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

February 2010

Volume 6, Issue 20

Sink Your Teeth into Lifelong Oral Care

Every February, the American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children's Dental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of good oral health. Each stage of life brings a new stage of oral care. The arrival of the first tooth is a milestone for a baby. Then the loss of baby teeth is celebrated by a visit from the "Tooth Fairy"; but as we get older, we must work hard to prevent the loss of teeth. Additionally, our pursuit of the perfect smile often starts in our teens with braces and continues into adulthood as we work to make our teeth whiter.

According to the ADA, developing good habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits helps children get a good start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. We also know that the condition of the mouth affects the health of the whole body. Cavities and inflamed or diseased gums can lead to serious medical problems like some types of heart disease. The mouth is the doorway into the body and if we let bad foods in, this too affects our health.

By following some simple yet timeless tips for healthy teeth, we can feel more certain that we will enjoy a lifetime with a healthy mouth and teeth.

- Brush at least twice a day for two minutes.
- Remember to floss daily; it helps to remove particles between your teeth.
- Visit a dentist at least yearly for a professional cleaning and check-up.
- Replace toothbrushes or brush heads every three months to prevent against worn bristles.
- Avoid too many sugary sweets as well as sticky foods that can damage your teeth.
- Avoid or moderate use of heavily acidic beverages such as colas, tea, coffee, and soda in because they wear teeth down.
- Ensure your diet has enough calcium since it helps teeth and bones grow strong.

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (CTDHP), manages the state of Connecticut's publicly funded dental health care programs for Husky A, Husky B, Medicaid (Title XIX Fee-for-service) and SAGA. If you are already in HUSKY A, HUSKY B, Medicaid (Title XIX Fee-for-Service) or SAGA then you can access dental services now! Call the CTDHP at 1-866-420-2924 to find a dentist that takes this insurance.

If not, you can access dental services through the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership by enrolling in one of Connecticut's Medical Assistance Programs, HUSKY A, HUSKY B, Medicaid (Title XIX Fee-for-Service) or SAGA. Information on enrollment can be obtained by contacting HUSKY enrollment at 1-800-656-6684 or visit their website at www.huskyhealth.com. [Note: there are no dental benefits for members of the Charter Oak Plan.]

Public Health Web Resources

West Haven Dept. of Public Health: www.whhd.org, **CT State Dept. of Public Health:** www.dph.state.ct.us
CDC: www.cdc.gov **HUSKY:** www.huskyhealth.com **American Dental Association:** www.ada.org

West Haven Department of Public Health 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT 06516. Phone: (203) 937-3660.

To join our fax or e-mail list, please contact the editor, Maureen B. Lillis, MPH, CHES at mlillis@westhaven-ct.gov, or the Director of Health, Eric Triffin, MPH at ETriffin@westhaven-ct.gov or by fax at (203) 937-3676.