

Anticipatory Guidance

Throughout middle childhood

- Ensure that the child wears a safety belt in the car at all times.
- Ensure that the child brushes her teeth twice a day with a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Regularly supervise the toothbrushing.
- Give the child fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional, based on the level of fluoride in the child's drinking water.
- Ensure that the child wears a helmet when riding a bicycle.
- Ask any questions you have about how to prevent dental injuries and handle dental emergencies, especially in the loss or fracture of a tooth.
- Provide the child's caregivers with the dentist's emergency phone contacts and ensure that the caregivers know how to handle oral health emergencies.
- Familiarize yourself with the normal appearance of your child's gums and teeth so that you can identify problems if they occur.
- Schedule the next dental appointment for the child according to the schedule recommended by the dental professional, based on the child's individual needs and/or susceptibility to disease.

At 6 years:

- Teach the child about sports safety, including the need to wear protective sports gear such as a mouth guard and a face protector.
- If the child regularly sucks fingers or thumb, begin to intervene gently to help the child stop.
[Health or dental professional can recommend strategies.]

At 8 years:

- Teach the child how to floss.
- Teach the child how to handle dental emergencies, especially the loss or fracture of a tooth.
- Teach the child not to smoke or use spit tobacco.

At 10 years:

- Help the child understand the dangers of smoking, spit tobacco, and other drugs.

Review

Chart with assessment of child's oral health

Appropriate screening/referral

Follow-up

Utilization review (appropriateness/quality of care)

Policies of dental professional and health professional regarding quality of care

Clinical treatment should be administered according to accepted guidelines



Outcomes

- ☞ Parents and child are informed of oral development issues
- ☞ Parents and child are informed of and practice preventive oral health care
- ☞ Child wears safety belt
- ☞ Child wears appropriate play and athletic protective gear
- ☞ Child does not suck fingers or thumb
- ☞ Child does not use tobacco or other drugs
- ☞ Child receives appropriate fluoride supplementation
- ☞ Child has been assessed for dental sealants
- ☞ Child is under the care of a dentist
- ☞ Child has no active carious lesions
- ☞ Child has healthy oral soft tissues
- ☞ Child has functional occlusion

Preventing Oral Injuries

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hen Aisha came for her visit, the first thing Dr. Davila noticed was her proud smile. The second thing was her bright soccer uniform. “Well, Aisha, you look so happy, it must be because of that brand new uniform!” said Dr. Davila, pointing to her shiny blue shorts and shirt.

“Hi, Dr. Davila!” Aisha said. “My uniform is pretty new, but look at my front teeth, they’re really new!” Aisha pointed to her new permanent front teeth, so excited that she was growing up. She told Dr. Davila about her team and how much she enjoyed playing. “I scored two goals in my last game,” she announced proudly.

Aisha was seeing Dr. Davila today because Aisha’s mother wanted her to get a mouth guard. Aisha didn’t think she needed one, but Dr. Davila explained that a mouth guard would be the best way to protect her teeth from injuries. “Let me show you some photos of kids, just like you, who have tooth injuries from playing sports without a mouth guard.”

Aisha looked at the photos and quickly changed her mind. “I don’t want my teeth to get hurt like that!” When Dr. Davila presented her with that bright plastic mouth guard in her team’s color, she was convinced that wearing a mouth guard wasn’t so bad after all. 



