



Remember Oral Health When Preparing Kids for Back to School

Don't let back to school mean a step back for oral hygiene! Simply add a toothbrush to the list of pencils, notebooks, and other supplies on your back to school shopping list. Kids should be encouraged to practice healthy habits at home and at school.

Maintaining good oral health habits through the school year is easy, and can be fun too, says Dr. Beth Kailes. Look for themed toothbrushes that will keep your younger child's interest and "all-in-one" disposables that are likely to appeal to older students. She adds that dental floss is also easy to carry and the flavors can help rev up a long afternoon. When practicable, let your child participate in selecting the oral hygiene supplies for school.

Choose Snacks to Keep Students Alert and Healthy

Dr. Kailes warns that snacks like chips, cookies, and dried fruit are full of dental caries causing sugars that stick to the teeth until they are effectively brushed away. Fresh fruit and vegetable snacks provide nutrition for good health and help keep children alert for good learning outcomes.

Good choices are:

Almonds (raw)	Cheese
Apple slices	Grapes
Bananas	Oranges
Carrot sticks	Walnuts
	Yogurt (plain)

Cheese is particularly good for your teeth – although it can contain a lot of fat, so don't overdo it. Besides protecting your teeth against bacteria that cause decay, cheese contains proteins like casein that act as a buffer against decay-promoting acids formed when you eat sugary foods.

Avoid vending machines for snacks and drinks. The only exception, according to Dr. Beth, is snacks sweetened with xylitol, which may actually discourage caries. This is commonly seen in sugar free gum. Before providing this for your child, check your school's policy regarding chewing gum on the premises. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated in our tropical climate or choose milk instead of cola, juice, or tea.

Dr. Kailes' Snack Tip for Busy Moms

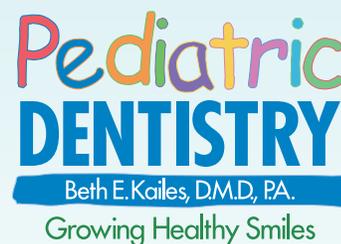
Buy a bag of baby carrots and place 2-3 carrots in a snack bag for each child and each day of the school week. Store in your vegetable drawer in the fridge. When making a healthy lunch, it's easy to grab. Crunchy fruits and vegetables are great to have at the end of lunch or snack to help clean out food from the chewing surfaces of the teeth.

Here's a link to a healthy lunchbox game for kids:

http://www.colgate.com/app/Kids-World/US/Game_Orchard.cvsp

Don't Forget the Mouth Guard

Traumatic injury can pose a danger to your child's teeth. If your student participates in contact sports, be sure to provide a properly fitted mouth guard to be worn during practice and play. Parents can prepare "boil and bite" mouth guards at home for children whose smiles are changing rapidly as new permanent teeth emerge. Dentist-made custom guards can be made for older children who have all their permanent teeth.



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