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**How to reduce the proportion of dental caries in children aged 6-9 years.**

Dental care is essential because good dental health will have a positive impact on a child's life, this will allow him to chew well and be able to eat all the food he needs to grow well. Good dentition is also essential for good language development. Finally, healthy teeth contribute to good self-esteem. It is also good to get the baby used to brush teeth as soon as the first teeth appear. In this way, brushing will be part of his routine, and this will also allow the first teeth to form in a clean environment. Also, brushing your teeth will stimulate your gums. There is a history of decay in primary or permanent teeth of children in between 6-9 years, compared to 45% of children in the general U.S. population. The Healthy People (HP) 2020 target is 49%. Almost half of 6-9-year-old AI/AN children (47%) had untreated decay. So, prevent caries, it’s possible.

To reduce the proportion of caries in children aged 6-9, it is necessary to have:

* Dental hygiene is effective and regular.
* A good diet.
* A regular check by parents.
* A regular follow-up to his dentist.

**Early childhood caries**

Early childhood caries occurs before the age of 5 and can reach the baby's first teeth. When the child eats or drinks, food particles stick to his teeth. Caries bacteria then convert the sugar of these particles into acids. It is these acids that attack the tooth enamel. When a child has a decay, the enamel becomes dull, yellow and sometimes brown. Once started, decay quickly worsens. It is often painful and can affect a child's sleep and diet. Caries can also have a negative impact on growth and language learning. It must, therefore, be treated quickly.

**How to recognize caries?**

Decay is manifested by brown spots in the groove of the tooth and pain, but often less intense than when decay touches a definitive tooth. In children, it can start on the upper incisors and untreated attack the canines and temporary molars. It spreads little on the surface but digs a cavity at the bottom of a furrow or between two teeth (the most painful). It evolves towards the inside of the tooth, from the surface towards the pulp that is to say towards the center of the tooth where the nerves and the blood vessels are located. When it reaches the dental nerve, tooth rage is declared: there we must act quickly. The destruction of a milk tooth can also have adverse consequences on the future dentition.

**Risk factors**

Some families tend to have cavities more often. There is, therefore, a hereditary aspect to tooth decay. However, some behaviors increase the risk of cavities, such as:

* Consumption of juice and sugary foods regularly.
* Sleeping with a bottle of milk or juice, which causes elongated contact of the sugared liquid with the teeth.
* Do not brush your teeth every day.
* Do not use fluorinated products, such as fluoride toothpastes.

Some parents believe that decay is less severe when it touches the baby teeth. However, these teeth are very important. They serve as guides for adult teeth and ensure that there will be enough space when they come out. Also, a tooth decayed milk tooth that is not treated can infect the adult tooth that is forming under the gum. Finally, baby teeth are essential for eating well and learning to talk.

**How to clean the teeth of a young child?**

In general, a young child needs help to brush his teeth. By the age of 6, he is probably able to do it alone. The moment a toddler is ready can however vary a lot from one child to another. Some need supervision longer. To brush your child's teeth, use a fluoride toothpaste. This type of toothpaste is safe and effective in preventing tooth decay. However, use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste, the equivalent of the size a pea for children aged 3 to 6 years old.

Do this to brush your teeth: Place both in front of a mirror. Stand behind him and press his head against you. Start by pushing one of his lips with your free hand, then brush his teeth vertically, always going from the gum to the tips of his teeth. Push back the other lip, and start again. Encourage your child to spit out the excess toothpaste. Ask your child not to rinse his mouth after brushing. Thus, the fluoride contained in the toothpaste will continue to protect its teeth against cavities.

**For him to accept brushing his teeth**

Flossing: As soon as the child's teeth touch each other, it is advisable to floss every night to complete the brushing. It cleans the surfaces of the teeth that the toothbrush does not reach. Some kids do not like brushing their teeth. Here are some tips that will make it easier for you and your child: Start by letting him try on his own. This session of brushing will be the fun aspect of the activity. Brush your teeth in front of him. Children love to imitate their parents. Bring your child's attention with a bright toothbrush, singing a nursery rhyme or asking him to hold a small mirror. To encourage your baby to open his mouth, ask him to open his mouth like a little bird to brush his teeth before. For the back teeth, ask him to roar like a lion.

**How to prevent early childhood caries**

* Adopt good dental hygiene by brushing your child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day. Brushing before sleeping is very important.
* Limit the consumption of sugary foods or drinks such as sweets and soft drinks.
* Never put sugar or honey on a pacifier or bottle nipple, thinking to encourage your child to accept them.
* Do not let your child sleep and walk around with a bottle or goblet that contains milk, juice, or other sweet products. These drinks should be taken at the time of the meal or snack.
* Encourage your child to stop using the bottle at 12 months of age.
* Beware of sugar in medicines or syrups. If you give it to your child, clean his teeth afterward or, at the very least, rinse his mouth with water.
* Regularly check the appearance of his teeth, including those at the back of his mouth. Be aware of dull white, yellowish or brownish spots near the gum line, as decay often begins there. These spots could be caries.
* Visit a dentist at least once a year.

Your child complains of having a toothache when eating. On one of his teeth, you see a small stain. Take a quick appointment with the dentist because caries evolves faster in a toddler and must be treated as quickly as possible.

**Make an appointment with the dentist**

Even if your child's small milk teeth are white like porcelain, it is recommended to make the first visit to the dentist at around 18 months, if only to benefit from his prevention tips. This first contact allows your child to become familiar with the practitioner and all this strange equipment that has something to impress a toddler. The day when it will be necessary to cure its first decay, the session will be less stressful. Preferably, go to a dentist who is used to treating children. Practitioners today benefit from new equipment that makes painless care. They use Carislov, a product that dissolves cavities without pain.

Early learning for children the importance of having good oral health is the best way to give them good habits for life. Dental disease is an almost preventable disease, but untreated it can lead to serious health problems. By adopting the above mentioned preventive measures, tooth decay in children can be reduced.

**References**

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