

February is Children's Dental Health Month

PITTSBURGH — What frames your smile, fills out your face, and contributes to good nutrition? Your teeth, of course! Since February is Children's Dental Health Month, it's time to show some respect for this highly visible and extremely useful part of your body.

Teeth are expected to last a lifetime which means their care and feeding during childhood is especially important. Throughout those many years they help us bite crisp apples, crunch buttery popcorn, and chew a juicy hamburger. Without teeth it's difficult for our body to get the nutrients it needs and without nutrients teeth have difficulty remaining healthy.

For children, healthy teeth begin before birth. Teeth are formed in the fifth or sixth week following conception. From the fourth to sixth month of pregnancy, all twenty "baby" teeth form under the gums.

Thus the expectant mother can help the healthy development of her baby's teeth by choosing foods that contribute calcium, phosphorus, Vitamin D, and other tooth-forming nutrients. Four dairy servings each of milk/dairy products, whole or enriched grains, and fruits and vegetables and two servings of meat/fish/poultry or beans are important choices in the diet during pregnancy.

Once an infant is born, teeth continue to develop, pushing their way through the gums on schedule with nature. Food choices throughout childhood should include nutrients for the developing teeth and gums, especially calcium, protein, and Vitamin C. Good dental health habits should be a part of learning. Such habits should include keeping the mouth clean and free from any substance which might harm the developing teeth.

Tooth decay can begin early in life and is caused by acids. When food remains in the mouth for twenty minutes or more or when plaque coats the teeth, there is the opportunity for damage to the teeth. Bacteria in the mouth can produce acids from carbohydrates, both sugars and starches. These acids can weaken the normally hard outer coating of teeth, the enamel.

Some general rules include: brushing and flossing teeth daily to remove plaque; brushing or rinsing after eating or drinking; choosing healthy snacks; and having regular dental examinations. For the young child, dental care should begin as soon as teeth begin to push through the gums. Infants should not be allowed to sleep with a bottle since even the casual sucking that goes on in sleeping can bathe the teeth in carbohydrate containing liquids.

Honey or sugar should never be put on nipples or pacifiers.

From infancy through early childhood, an adult should supervise care of developing teeth and a qualified dental professional should help instruct children on caring for their own teeth. Nutrition care should include teaching children to choose snacks which contribute to health without risking dental health. Of special importance are foods that are good sources of the nutrients so important to developing teeth. Yogurt, cheese, and milk are sources of calcium and phosphorus as well as protein. Fresh fruits and vegetables offer Vitamin C as well as offering the crunch that makes

Moore to speak at Corn Conference

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA. — The effect of world corn production on local corn profits will be one topic discussed at the First Pennsylvania Corn Conference, scheduled for March 11 at the Keller Conference Center of The Pennsylvania State University.

H. Louis Moore, Penn State professor of agricultural economics, will address "the implications of the 1985 farm bill — the impacts of the dairy buy-out program and conservation reserve

plan on corn producers" at the conference. Moore will also examine the growth of the world corn market and its effect on Pennsylvania corn producers.

Moore will speak during the morning session, which will concentrate on high-efficiency production techniques and new uses for corn. Participants can choose between two afternoon sessions—a cash grain session on the various methods of profiting in corn production, or a livestock session on the differences between selling grain and using corn in meat production.

Both guest speakers and exhibitors will be featured at the conference, which is sponsored by The Pennsylvania Master Corn Growers' Association, Allied Industries, and the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service.

eating so satisfying.

In honor of Children's Dental Health Month, take some time to help the young people in your life take charge of their own lifetime of smiles. Healthy eating, good dental health habits, and regular checkups are a good start.

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