



# Gerstenmaier

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

*from day one*



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## Stopping Cavities Before They Start

The best way to stop cavities is to start adopting healthy oral hygiene routines for your children as soon as their teeth start to appear.



That may be unexpected to some parents, but it's important that you schedule your child's first visit to the dentist by their first birthday. One trip to the dentist when there's even just one tooth will mean zero cavities. Baby teeth are especially vulnerable to decay and, if left unchecked, can affect a child's ability to eat properly. Untreated cavities can lead to infection and tooth loss requiring expensive emergency treatment. Properly caring for your child's baby teeth by visiting us, **your dental home**, before age one will ensure that your child has a head start toward good nutrition, speech development, and healthy progress toward the unimpeded eruption of permanent teeth.

The American Dental Association (ADA) advises parents to begin helping young children, especially infants, care for their teeth in the following simple, safe ways:

- Use a moistened gauze pad to clean gums.
- Floss daily as soon as teeth are close enough together.
- Use a soft toothbrush and plain water.
- Parents should brush baby teeth twice daily as soon as they appear, using only a tiny smear of fluoride toothpaste.
- When old enough to not swallow, around 3 to 6 years, apply only a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.

As your children get older, it's important to continue to schedule regular dental check-ups to ensure that dental habits at home are effective. Taking the time to teach them how to properly brush and also about the perils of poor diet will help to lay the



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dental hygiene!



foundation for a lifetime of good oral and overall health.

## Getting Kids to Smile About Brushing

The first dental habit that children should develop is regularly, consistently brushing their teeth. We realize that this is easier said than done as it can be challenging to keep kids on schedule, but we also have forty years of experience finding fun ways to help them become better brushers.

One simple step that can go a long way toward enabling your child to take ownership of their oral hygiene is by letting them choose their toothbrush and toothpaste (so long as its ADA approved), as this will provide them with a sense of control over the experience. Doing so should help to turn what might have been an anxiety-inducing process into an exciting one. As soon as they're old enough to do so, let them brush on their own and take pride in their progress. Be sure to check when they've finished, but remember to always encourage their efforts.

Try scheduling brushing before something else that your young one enjoys such as story time. Soon enough, they'll begin to associate the fun of that shared activity with the act of brushing, anticipating one along with the other.

Nevertheless, brushing consistently before bedtime is especially important. It will help to prevent plaque from settling on the teeth overnight and your child will know what to expect and when, which should also help cut down on any last-minute avoidance.

Show them that brushing doesn't have to be boring by singing songs, making silly faces, or letting them bring toys that can watch from the side of the sink. Hang a chart by the mirror or in their bedroom that tracks with a colorful sticker each time they brush without making a fuss. By involving the whole family at times, you can show the child that brushing is an important part of everyone's daily routine.

Most of all, be sure to lead by example by being excited to brush and care for your own teeth on a routine basis. Doing so daily will demonstrate to your child that oral hygiene and good habits are a source of pride and not just a chore.



Good dental habits make for healthy mouths and happy kids. We're here to help however we can to keep your kids smiling, especially when it comes to brushing.

## About Our Practice

Gerstenmaier Pediatric Dentistry is a family owned practice located in Akron, Ohio. From day one, we have provided children, adolescents, families and adults with special needs with the right care at the right time -- ensuring positive dental experiences that last a lifetime and bring bright and happy smiles to every patient.