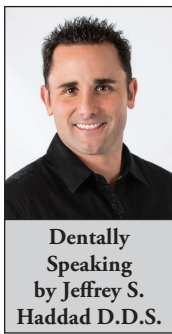


COLUMN

Why are Baby Teeth so Important?

Dentistry has changed drastically in the past couple decades, and this is especially true for children growing up in today's dental world. I am routinely asked by parents about the benefits of fluoride and if dental sealants "really work." Another common question is, "why would I put a filling in a baby tooth if it is only going to fall out?" All of these are very valid questions and good points that parents make, and I know that when educated properly, they will make the right decisions for their children. Obviously, parents want the best for their children, but because things have changed since they were youths, the new recommendations of today are often quite foreign. My goal in this month's column is to educate parents on what they should be providing their children at home, and what kind of services they should expect from their dentist to keep their children's teeth as healthy as possible.

When I was in dental school it was thought that the most important time to use fluoride was while the teeth were forming. Although systemic fluoride is important in developing strong teeth it is now known to be more important to have topical fluoride on the teeth after they develop to prevent cavities. The greatest benefits can be seen when small amounts of fluoride are constantly maintained in contact with the tooth via saliva. Thus, adults also benefit from fluoride, rather than only children, as was previously assumed. What does this mean for you and your children? Fluoride treatments that are recommended to you, especially for your children, are extremely important to the overall health of teeth. In our office, we have chosen to utilize fluoride in a varnish form due to its ease of application and little to no taste. The varnish is painted directly onto the teeth and holds the fluoride in close contact with the teeth for many hours. Our patients tend to prefer this method because they can



Dentally Speaking
by Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S.

eat and drink immediately following the application.

In my opinion, the simple procedure of dental sealants is one of the biggest improvements dentistry offers our young ones. Dental sealants act as a barrier, protecting the teeth against decay-causing bacteria. The

sealants are usually applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth where decay occurs most often. We utilize sealants that also release fluoride after being placed, which continues to protect the treated teeth. If sealants were available when I was growing up, I would most likely have avoided the majority of my dental work. Please consider fluoride and sealants a huge benefit when your dentist offers it, regardless of your insurance plan. Both procedures cost a fraction of what a filling would cost. This necessary treatment could be the difference in protecting you and your child's dentition from cavities, and future dental work.

So what happens if your child gets a cavity? Unfortunately, tooth decay is still the most common disease in children so this is a very regular occurrence in our office. Although common sense would lead us to believe that losing baby teeth would be a solution to tooth decay, this is not the proper approach. Here are some reasons why:

1. The baby teeth are placeholders for the permanent teeth. The body naturally loses baby teeth in a certain order to allow enough room for the permanent teeth to come in. If the teeth fall out earlier or are extracted because of decay, you disrupt this order and there may not be enough room for the permanent teeth.

2. Cavities in baby teeth can cause infections that can harm your child and damage the developing permanent teeth. If the baby teeth are damaged, the damage isn't isolated to the baby teeth.

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Why are Baby Teeth so Important?

This disease can spread to the other teeth in the mouth, including the permanent ones. If a permanent tooth erupts into this diseased environment, it will be subjected this bacteria resulting in a cavity in it as well. Additionally, when a cavity reaches the pulp (the nerve) inside the tooth, it enters the bloodstream and can cause an infection. Usually the infection stays around the root of the tooth, but it can spread to other places in the body.

3. Baby teeth allow the child to develop good oral hygiene habits. It is much easier to teach a child the right brushing and flossing habits when they are young than it is to retrain an older child who has had bad habits for years. While I don't like

to consider the baby teeth to be "practice teeth", I do think parents should use the time before their children's permanent teeth come in to teach them how to take care of their teeth.

If this is done, there will be fewer problems with the child's permanent teeth because the child will know how to take care of them.

Home care is obviously just as important in this "battle" against tooth decay. Key ingredients in preventing tooth decay and maintaining a healthy mouth are twice-daily brushing with an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste; cleaning between the teeth daily with floss or interdental cleaners; eating a balanced diet and limiting snacks; and visiting your dentist regularly. I also

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recommend over-the-counter fluoride rinses at night for people who are more prone to cavities.

Hopefully, this sheds some light on why baby teeth are so important and will give parents the right information to make the proper decisions for their children's dental health.

Jeffrey S. Haddad, DDS of Doolin & Haddad Advanced Dentistry, completed his dental education at the University of Michigan in 2001. Dr. Haddad is a fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies.

He lectures nationally on cosmetic dentistry, TMJ disorders and practice management. For more information, visit www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com.

COMMUNITY EVENTS & ORGANIZATIONS

EVENTS

Unity Church holds Pet Blessing October 6

The annual Pet Blessing at Unity Church will take place on Saturday, Oct. 6 at 11 a.m. ALL are welcome. Call 248-656-0120 to submit the name(s) of your pet for a blessing certificate. Donations of pet food welcome. Unity Church is located at 1038 Harding Ave. in Rochester.

The Stoney Creek High School Music Program Fundraiser at Little Caesar's Arena Wednesday, Nov. 28

The Stoney Creek Marching Band will be performing at Little Caesars Arena prior to the Detroit Red Wings vs. St. Louis Blues game. Hockey tickets are just \$45 (a \$75 value). Get tickets at <https://squareup.com/store/stoney-creek-high-school-music-boosters>.

Community Foundation of Greater Rochester Tailgate Party October 25

Each year, the Community Foundation of Greater Rochester celebrates the football season with a Tailgate Party at the Royal Park Hotel. This year's event will take place on October 25 at 6 p.m. The party will celebrate the Foundation's 35th anniversary and the launch of its new Community Enhancement Fund. Individual tickets for the October 25 Tailgate Party are \$65. Tickets and Table Sponsorships (\$650) are available at www.cfound.org. The Royal Park Hotel is located at 600 East University in Rochester.

Rummage Sale - St. Paul's United Methodist Church

The annual St. Paul's Rummage Sale starts on Friday, Oct. 12 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and runs until Saturday, Oct. 13, from 9 a.m. to noon. Check out the Unique Boutique (new and designer clothing) on the lower level along with the books/video room, toys room, holiday and craft items, and children's clothing and accessories rooms. The church is located at 620 Romeo Street, Rochester, a half mile east of Rochester Road. For information call 248-651-9361.

First Congregational Church Fall Rummage Sale October 5-6

The First Congregational Church Fall Rummage Sale will take place October 5-6. The \$5 Early Bird Special will take place on October 5 at 8:30 a.m., followed by the regular sale, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; bag day will take place October 6, from 9 a.m.-noon (\$4 and 30 gallon bags, \$10). Only cash will be accepted. The church is located two blocks south of Tienken Road and one block west of Rochester Road. For more information call 248-651-6225.

ORGANIZATIONS

VFW Post 3908

VFW Meetings are held at the Rochester Utica Post 3908, 47326 Dequindre Road in Utica. They meet the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Call 586-854-5344 for more information.

Newcomers & Neighbors of Greater Rochester

Whether you are new to the area or have lived here your whole life, the Newcomers & Neighbors Club of Greater Rochester has something to offer. To learn more, email rochesternewcomers@gmail.com. The location of the coffee will be provided when the reservation is made.

Rochester Lions Club Monthly Meetings

The Lions Club meets the first and third Monday of each month at River Crest Banquet Center at 900 E. Avon Road, in Rochester Hills. Meetings start at 7 p.m.. For more information visit their website at rochesterlionsclub.org.

Oakland County Quilt Guild

The Oakland County Quilt Guild meets the first Thursday of each month, September through June at the First Congregational Church, 1315 N. Pine in Rochester at 7 p.m. The purpose of the guild is to promote and preserve the art of quilting. New members and visitors are welcome. For more information, visit online at www.oaklandcountyquiltguild.com.

Rochester Writers' Group

The Rochester Writers' Group holds their monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of the month at the Rochester Hills Barnes & Noble at 7:30 p.m. The group is FREE and OPEN to new, published, and working writers, photographers and illustrators. Upcoming meetings: October 16; November 20.