



## February is National Children's Dental Health Month

By Thuy Nguyen

Did you know that tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in children? This can be preventable by limiting and avoiding certain foods, starting good oral habits early, and visiting the dentist regularly.

How important is a good diet to your dental health? Choosing the right food as well as the right amount promotes good dental health.

When choosing your meals and snacks, keep these tips in mind:

- ◆ Drink plenty of water
- ◆ Eat a variety of foods from each of the five food groups.

To learn what food is best for you, visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) The site contains dietary recommendations for children and adults based on your physical activity.

If you snack, choose foods that are healthy, such as, fruits or vegetables or a piece of cheese. Always remember to brush your teeth twice a day and floss daily. REMEMBER, a healthy mouth helps you eat well, helps you avoid pain and tooth loss, and makes you feel good about yourself. Click on the links below to get more information.

### *Healthy Mouth for Your Baby*

<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/ToothDecay/Documents/healthy-mouth-for-your-baby.pdf>

### *Kids Health: Keeping Your Child's Teeth Healthy*

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/healthy.html?ref=search>

### *National Institute on Aging: Taking Care of Your Teeth and Mouth*

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/taking-care-your-teeth-and-mouth#information>

## **Dental Care for Children/Adult with Developmental Disabilities**

Caring for someone with special health care needs requires patience and skill, but taking care of their dental needs is a challenge. The most effective way for

them to interact with the world is by their smiles. Below are some resources I thought would be helpful to parents/guardians caring for a child/adult with special health care needs.

### *Dental Care Every Day: A Caregiver's Guide:*

<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities/>

### *National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research: Developmental Disabilities & Oral Health*

<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities/>

### *American Academy of Pediatrics: Oral Health Challenges for Children with Disabilities*

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/Oral-Health-Challenges-for-Children-with-Disabilities.aspx>



**Changing Lives Every Day.**