

*Below is an important letter from  
a Lab parent who will be coming to speak to our students about  
Dental Health next week!*

Dear Parents,

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. As a dentist and a Lab mom, I consider this the perfect opportunity to come to our school next week and teach our students about oral health.

Did you know that a child's dental health is directly linked to his or her overall health? Because poor oral health can lead to painful infections, malnutrition, sleep deprivation and lifelong health problems, it is critical to pay attention to your child's dental health. Dental decay is the nation's most common chronic childhood disease; the good news is that it is preventable. Here are some topics I will cover with your children along with a few tips:

1. CONTROL PLAQUE by brushing teeth for two minutes twice a day and flossing daily. Plaque can cause dental decay, gum disease, and bad breath. Studies have even shown a link between gum disease and heart disease in adults.
2. USE FLUORIDE in your toothpaste (choose one with the American Dental Association (ADA) seal of approval) and in your mouth rinse (such as ACT or the purple Listerine.) Mecklenburg County has fluoridated drinking water so that is sufficient; if you have well water, it should be tested to see if supplements are needed.
3. Eat a BALANCED DIET and limit sugar consumption between meals. Sticky sugars (such as fruit roll-ups, raisins, gummy candy) are the worst for teeth. Avoid sports drinks and sodas- the sugar and acidity will destroy tooth enamel. Foods like chips and crackers leave particles that remain on teeth feeding plaque bacteria long after the snack is finished. Carrots, apples, and celery are nature's toothbrushes, so they are great choices.
4. Chew SUGARLESS GUM WITH XYLITOL (ex.Trident)-it has been proven to prevent dental decay. (But not at school!)
5. Get REGULAR DENTAL CARE. See a dentist twice a year for cleanings and check ups.
6. Ask your dentist about SEALANTS to fill in deep tooth grooves that may collect plaque.
7. Ask your dentist if it's time to see an ORTHODONTIST. A baseline evaluation is recommended at age 7 or 8. If a baby tooth is lost prematurely, a space maintainer is needed to prevent future crowding of the permanent teeth.
8. A MOUTHGUARD should be worn when playing contact sports. If a permanent tooth falls out in an EMERGENCY, do not touch the root but try to keep it moist either between the cheek and the gums or in a container of milk. Call your dentist ASAP.
9. P.S. Most of this advice applies to adults too. Let's lead by example!

If you would like me to elaborate on any of these points, I encourage you to email me at [johannakalons@yahoo.com](mailto:johannakalons@yahoo.com).

Thank you,

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For more information:

- [www.mouthhealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org)
- [www.2min2x.org](http://www.2min2x.org)
- [Toothsavers Brushing Game](#) app (Inspires kids to brush.)