

FEBRUARY 26

**CHILDREN'S ORAL
HEALTH MONTH:
BUILDING HEALTHY
SMILES FROM AN
EARLY AGE**



Welcome to the February 2026 issue of the CareGuard Oral Health Bulletin.

February is recognized across the United States as National Children's Dental Health Month, an annual campaign that encourages families, educators, healthcare professionals, and communities to promote healthy oral habits in children.

Healthy smiles begin early. This month's bulletin shares practical, evidence-based strategies to help children develop lifelong oral health habits.

WHY CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH MATTERS

Good oral health is essential for a child's overall health, development, and well-being.

Healthy teeth help children:

- Eat nutritious foods comfortably
- Speak clearly
- Sleep better
- Smile with confidence
- Focus in school
- Avoid unnecessary pain and infections

Tooth decay remains one of the most common chronic diseases among children, yet it is largely preventable through consistent daily care and regular preventive dental visits.



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BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS EARLY

Children learn best through daily routines and positive examples. Parents and caregivers can help by:

- ✓ Brushing children's teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- ✓ Supervising brushing until children develop good brushing skills.
- ✓ Encouraging flossing once teeth begin touching.
- ✓ Scheduling regular preventive dental visits.
- ✓ Offering healthy snacks instead of sugary treats.

Creating healthy habits early helps protect smiles for a lifetime.



HEALTHY SNACKS FOR HEALTHY TEETH



Food choices play an important role in oral health.

Choose more often:

- Fresh fruits
- Vegetables
- Cheese
- Yogurt without added sugar
- Nuts (when age appropriate)
- Water

Limit:

- Sticky candies
- Sugary drinks
- Frequent snacking
- Sweet desserts
- Fruit-flavored snacks with added sugar

Water remains the healthiest beverage for growing smiles.

PREVENTION CHECKLIST FOR FAMILIES

Every day:

- **Brush twice daily.**
- **Use fluoride toothpaste.**
- **Floss once daily.**
- **Drink plenty of water.**

Every few months:

- **Replace toothbrushes every 3–4 months or after illness.**

Every year:

- **Schedule regular preventive dental examinations.**

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Healthy smiles are supported by many community partners.

Families may benefit from:

- School-based oral health education programs
- Community Health Centers
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- Dental school clinics
- Medicaid dental benefits (for eligible children)
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Access to preventive care helps reduce future dental problems and supports children's overall health.



THIS MONTH'S HEALTHY SMILE CHALLENGE

- ☐ **BRUSH TOGETHER TWICE A DAY**
- ☐ **READ ONE BOOK OR EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE ABOUT HEALTHY TEETH**
- ☐ **REPLACE SUGARY DRINKS WITH WATER.**
- ☐ **CELEBRATE HEALTHY HABITS WITH POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT—NOT CANDY REWARDS**
- ☐ **SHARE ONE ORAL HEALTH TIP WITH A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER**

Small daily routines create healthy smiles that last a lifetime.

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