

AUGUST 26

BACK-TO-SCHOOL ORAL HEALTH

HEALTHY HABITS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR



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

As students prepare to return to school, it is the perfect time to reestablish healthy routines—including daily oral hygiene.

Good oral health supports children's overall well-being, helping them eat comfortably, speak clearly, stay focused in the classroom, and participate confidently in school activities.

This month's bulletin offers practical, evidence-based tips to help students and families start the school year with healthy smiles.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL HEALTHY SMILE CHECKLIST

- Before school starts, make sure your family is ready.
- Schedule a preventive dental examination if one is due.
- Replace worn toothbrushes.
- Purchase fluoride toothpaste.
- Pack a reusable water bottle.
- Choose healthy lunch and snack options. Encourage brushing twice daily and flossing every day.
- Small preparations now can help build healthy routines for the entire school year.

WHY ORAL HEALTH MATTERS AT SCHOOL

Healthy teeth and gums contribute to a child's ability to learn, communicate, and participate in daily activities.

Poor oral health may lead to:

- Tooth pain and discomfort
- Difficulty eating nutritious foods
- Missed school days
- Difficulty concentrating in class
- Reduced confidence when speaking or smiling
-

Establishing healthy habits before school begins can support both oral health and academic success throughout the year.



SMART LUNCHBOX CHOICES

Nutritious foods help support healthy teeth and gums.

Pack more often:

- Fresh fruits
- Vegetables
- Cheese
- Yogurt without added sugar
- Whole-grain crackers
- Nuts (when appropriate)
- Water

Limit:

- Sugary drinks
- Sticky candies
- Sweet pastries
- Frequent sugary snacks

Choosing water instead of sugary beverages is one of the easiest ways to protect children's teeth.



SPORTS SAFETY

As fall sports begin, remember to protect your smile.

Children and teenagers participating in contact sports should wear a properly fitted mouthguard whenever appropriate.

Mouthguards help reduce the risk of:

- Broken teeth
- Lip injuries
- Jaw injuries
- Dental emergencies

Protective equipment is an important part of injury prevention.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Healthy children miss fewer school days because of preventable dental problems.
- Daily brushing with fluoride toothpaste helps reduce the risk of tooth decay.
- Water supports healthy saliva production and helps rinse away food particles.
- Preventive dental care supports healthy growth and development.

MONTHLY SELF-CHECK

Take a few minutes once each month to become familiar with your mouth.

Look for:

- Persistent sores
- Unusual lumps
- Red or white patches
- Changes that do not heal

If you notice anything unusual lasting more than two weeks, contact a healthcare professional for evaluation.

Self-awareness is not a substitute for professional care but can help you recognize changes earlier.

MYTH VS. FACT

MYTH

"Baby teeth don't need much care because they will fall out anyway."

FACT

Healthy primary teeth help children eat, speak, and guide permanent teeth into proper position. Caring for baby teeth supports lifelong oral health.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Families may find affordable preventive dental services through:

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

These resources help improve access to preventive oral healthcare throughout the community.



THIS MONTH'S HEALTHY SMILE CHALLENGE

THIS MONTH, COMMIT TO PROTECTING YOUR ORAL HEALTH

- ☐ BRUSH TOGETHER TWICE EVERY DAY
- ☐ PACK WATER INSTEAD OF SUGARY DRINKS
- ☐ INCLUDE ONE HEALTHY SNACK IN EVERY LUNCH
- ☐ SCHEDULE A PREVENTIVE DENTAL VISIT IF NEEDED
- ☐ ENCOURAGE A FAMILY MEMBER TO JOIN YOU IN PRACTICING HEALTHY ORAL HABITS

Healthy routines established today can support healthy smiles throughout the school year.

PREPARED BY
DARIA BUINEVICH, DDS
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CAREGUARD INITIATIVE

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