

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PDA Reminds Parents about the Importance of Children's Oral Health

HARRISBURG, PA – February once again brings National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM), an oral health campaign that helps educate children about the importance of maintaining good oral health and developing healthy habits that will carry into adulthood. This year's theme is "Sealants make Sense."

Dental sealants are thin, plastic coatings painted onto teeth to prevent tooth decay by forming a protective shield over the enamel of each tooth. Sealants applied to permanent molars can greatly reduce the risk of decay.

By the time a child sees the dentist for the first time, it is likely that 1 in 5 will have some form of tooth decay. The good news is that tooth decay in children can often be prevented when parents are proactive.

"As dentists, we understand the importance of oral hygiene. If your dentist recommends sealants, it can be a valuable part of cavity prevention efforts," said Dr. Samer Mansour, Pennsylvania Dental Association's (PDA) statewide NCDHM chair and a member dentist practicing in Erie.

PDA encourages parents to help their children develop good habits at an early age, including:

- **Brush teeth twice a day, for at least two minutes each time.** Help your kids brush their teeth two minutes each time, twice a day -- for healthier teeth, fresh breath, fewer cavities and to avoid painful dental problems.
- **Floss between teeth at least once a day.** Break off about 18 inches of floss (the length from a fingertip to your elbow) and use it to floss younger kids' teeth or teach older kids how to do it themselves.

- **Establish healthy eating habits for your child.** Offer a variety of foods from the five major food groups: fruits, vegetables, dairy, grains and meat/poultry/fish. A balanced diet helps keep your children’s teeth and gums healthy. A diet high in natural or added sugars may place your child at extra risk for tooth decay.
- **Visit the dentist every six months for a checkup and professional cleaning.** Seeing a dentist regularly is important for good oral health. Dentists can detect small problems before they become bigger, more painful problems. Your child could have oral health problems you don’t know about like cavities or gum disease.
- **If your child is involved in any contact sport or recreational activity, they should always wear a mouthguard.** Examples of contact sports include football, field hockey, ice hockey, baseball, basketball, softball, wrestling, soccer, lacrosse, rugby, in-line skating and martial arts.
- **Find out if your water supply contains fluoride.** According to the American Dental Association (ADA), 75 years of our best scientific evidence indicates that community water fluoridation is safe and effective. Drinking water with fluoride (also known as “nature’s cavity fighter”) has been shown to reduce cavities by 25%.

Learning about oral health can be informative and fun at the same time for kids of all ages. Visit PDA’s online Kids’ Corner at www.padental.org/kidscorner for interactive games and activities, information on brushing and flossing, answers to frequently asked questions, nutritional information and more.

For more information on NCDHM, visit www.padental.org/ncdhm. Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/padentalassn and follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/padentalassn and Instagram at www.instagram.com/padentalassn.

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About the Pennsylvania Dental Association

Founded in 1868, the Pennsylvania Dental Association (PDA) is comprised of approximately 5,100 member dentists. It is a constituency of the American Dental Association (ADA), the largest and oldest national dental society in the world. PDA's mission is to improve the public health, promote the art and science of dentistry and represent the interests of its member dentists and their patients. PDA is the voice of dentistry in Pennsylvania. For more information on PDA, visit our website at [**www.padental.org**](http://www.padental.org).