



Hello, Trebein Elementary! Welcome to October and the celebration of National Dental Hygiene Month! It's great to be back to a daily routine and to the start of a wonderful school year in beautiful Beavercreek, Ohio



Daily oral hygiene routines are important for little ones all year, and these schedules are more easily ignored during the lazy days of summer. Dental decay is the number one chronic childhood disease in the United States and for the last decade it has been the top reason children miss school. Contributing even more to oral hygiene neglect these days is the ability to hide our pearly whites behind masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. During these uncertain times, it's even more important to maintain all aspects of our personal health, oral health included.

Brushing our teeth is, of course, step one. School-aged children should always be encouraged to brush for two minutes at least twice a day using a soft-bristled brush and a fluoridated toothpaste approved by the American Dental Association. This seems like an eternity for many, but a sand-timer or an electric toothbrush with timed "beeps" work well to help with this goal. It's also important that gums, the insides of cheeks, the tongue, and the roof of the mouth are gently brushed as well. Flossing is just as important for tooth and gum health, and should be utilized once a day, preferably right before bedtime. A long thread of floss is best, but floss sticks work well for younger ones who are still developing dexterity skills. Some flossers come in special flavors or colorful animal shapes to make the activity more desirable. A supplemental fluoridated mouthwash is recommended for some children but should never take the place of brushing and flossing.

Children should be encouraged to be independent with their oral hygiene, but most need some assistance throughout their elementary school years. It's helpful when children follow their own hygiene regimen and parents check their progress and address any areas missed. A professional cleaning and exam every six months at a dental office is crucial in maintaining a child's oral health and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends a child see a dentist by age one. This establishes a dental home for the child in case of emergencies and allows the dentist to evaluate growth, help prevent dental disease, educate caregivers, and build a positive, trusting relationship with the child at a young age.

Finally, National Dental Hygiene Month is a great time to show appreciation to our dental hygienists who help to maintain our oral health and keep our families smiling. Thank you for all you do, this month and always.

Happy Fall, Trebein Elementary!
Dr. Amber N. Wright Baker

Other useful sources of information:

<https://smilewrightdental.com/>

<https://www.aapd.org/>

<https://www.ohioapd.org>

<https://www.ada.org/en>

<https://www.oda.org/>

