

Children with Special Needs

- ▶ Good oral health is important for good general health. Preventing tooth decay and gum disease starts daily at home.
- ▶ Have a daily oral hygiene routine that is positive and fun. Use the same place, same time, and same steps every time.
- ▶ Brush your child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, after breakfast and before bed with a soft toothbrush. An electric toothbrush may be too stimulating for your child.
- ▶ Lift your child's lip regularly and look for white or brown spots on the front and back sides of the teeth near the gum line. See a dental provider if you notice changes.
- ▶ Give your child tap water that is optimally fluoridated. Fluoride is safe, effective, and keeps teeth strong.
- ▶ Limit juice, soda (including diet), and sports drinks between meals.



- ▶ Sweet and starchy foods (sticky fruit snacks, cookies, crackers, and chips) may cause tooth decay. Eat these foods at meal time. In between meals, snack on fresh fruits, vegetables, cheese, or nuts.
- ▶ Ask your medical provider for prescriptions and over-the-counter medications without sugar. Rinse your child's mouth with water after taking medication containing sugar.
- ▶ Watch for signs of dry mouth. Dry mouth can be caused by medications or health conditions and may lead to dental decay and difficulty in eating.
- ▶ Visit a dental provider. Many children with special needs can be seen in a general dental office.
- ▶ The University of Washington has fact sheets for children with special needs: <https://dental.washington.edu/oral-medicine/special-needs/patients-with-special-needs>

To reprint cards visit:

www.doh.wa.gov/OralHealthPromotionCards



For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY 711).