



for parents,
caregivers and
educators



it's fun to have healthy smiles

As a parent, caregiver or educator, you're no doubt aware of the importance of good oral health routines for children. Helping youngsters brush twice a day, floss daily and visit the dentist regularly are likely at the top of your dental health to-do list. But do they make the kids' priority lists? Probably not!

At Delta Dental, we know it can be challenging to get children interested in taking care of their teeth. That's why we created five fun activities to help motivate kids to make good oral health decisions. If you want to double down on the fun factor, you can use our reward system to celebrate the milestones they reach - both big and small. It may be helpful to establish your reward system before starting a challenge to make children aware of the prizes they are working toward!

Are you up to the challenge?

These challenges will help teach children that maintaining good oral health doesn't have to be a chore - it can be fun! The lessons they learn will last a lifetime. For more smile fun, be sure to read the educational flyers with your child and have him or her take the *Smile Smarts* quiz!

the challenges

challenge 1

say no to cavities club



The Challenge:

Parents can print or copy 12 of our specially designed calendar pages to hang in the bathroom. There's room on each day for children to mark when brushing (once in the morning and once at night) and flossing are complete.

Teachers may want to send the monthly calendar pages home on a weekly basis to have parents sign off on them. Alternatively, children can keep the monthly calendar page in their desks. It may be helpful for kids to check the boxes when school first starts while the memory of brushing and flossing from the previous night and before school is still fresh!

the challenges

challenge 1

say no to cavities club

The Rewards:

A year is a *long* time to stay engaged, so it's important to celebrate the little milestones!

	Teachers	Parents
Weekly	Stickers, fun erasers, pencils or plastic jewelry	
Monthly	Small toys or a healthy treat for the class	Small toys, fun toothbrush holder or water cup, a toothpaste squeezer or a small piggy bank contribution
Three months	A drawing for kids to have a meal or treat with the teacher	A new outfit, a medium-size toy or a special meal with mom or dad. Any reward should be accompanied by a new toothbrush, which should be replaced every three months.
Six months	A class field trip to the zoo or a local dentist's office, or a visit to the class from a dental professional	A larger toy, a larger piggy bank contribution, a bedtime extension, or an experience such as a trip to the zoo. Don't forget a new toothbrush!
One year or school year	Hold a "Best Brushers!" or "Say No to Cavities Champs!" party, including a photo board showing the students' beautiful smiles	Invite a few of your child's friends for a sleepover, then give everyone new toothbrushes and fun flavored toothpaste! Or, offer to give your child's bathroom a makeover, including new paint and bathroom accessories.

The Benefit:

Brushing twice daily for two minutes each time helps get rid of plaque and food debris, and flossing helps reach the crevices and spaces between teeth that a toothbrush can't. Removing plaque and food particles helps prevent tooth decay and cavities. Establishing a good daily oral health routine when your child is young is essential for a lifetime of healthy smiles.

Additionally, going to dental appointments at least once a year allows the dentist to make sure children's teeth are developing properly. Regular visits can also help children become familiar with the dentist and may reduce dental anxiety.

tip

If children are under age 7, they will likely need assistance to finish brushing and flossing. Kids under 7 typically don't have enough dexterity to do a thorough job on their own. For more tips, review our kids' flyer!

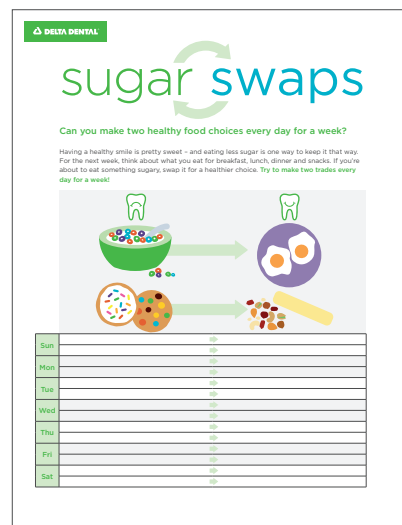
the challenges

challenge 2

sugar swaps

The Challenge:

Nothing is sweeter than a child's healthy smile – and eating less sugar is one way to keep it that way. Challenge children to think about their food choices at every meal and snack for a week. Ask them to replace two sugary items with two healthy items each day. It's as easy as trading a cookie for string cheese!



the challenges

challenge 2

sugar swaps

The Rewards:

At the end of the week, tally how many times the child made sugar swaps. Then reward them based on the total number of times a healthy decision was made.

Swaps	Reward
14	A trip to an apple orchard or pumpkin patch, dinner at a favorite restaurant, a piggy bank contribution, a medium-size toy, a special activity or celebration in class
10-13	A small toy, a new book, a new lunchbox, a healthy kids' cookbook or a small piggy bank contribution
5-9	A special placement, sugar-free gum, stickers, pencils or erasers
1-4	A new toothbrush and fun flavored toothpaste

Teachers may want to tally the total number of swaps the whole class achieves and adjust the award system as needed. For example, if everyone in a class of 25 makes all 14 sugar swaps, that would be 350 swaps. If the class makes 300 swaps or more, they get an extra recess at the end of the week.

The Benefit:

By teaching children how to make healthier decisions when it comes to sugar – even when an adult isn't around – you're helping them avoid cavities *and* achieve better overall health.

the challenges

challenge 3

protect your mouth

The Challenge:

It's common knowledge that wearing a mouthguard to protect teeth, gums and the jaw is essential when it comes to hard-hitting sports like football. But children need to protect their sparkling smiles during *any* sport that carries the potential for a mouth injury. That includes soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, hockey, volleyball, gymnastics, skateboarding and any other activities that pose a risk to teeth through falls or contact with other players or equipment.

The *Protect Your Mouth* challenge asks children in applicable sports to pledge to wear mouthguards during every game *and* every practice.

the challenges

challenge 3

protect your mouth

The Rewards:

Children should color a mouthguard on the sheet each time they wear one in a game or practice. Reward the children each time a multiple of five is reached, with the quality of the reward increasing with each increment.

Teachers and coaches may want to tally the total number of times mouthguards are worn by the whole team and adjust the award system as needed. For example, if a team of 10 achieves a collective goal of 150 mouthguard wears, they receive a special meal after practice.

Number of times wearing a mouthguard	Teachers/Coaches	Parents
5	A healthy snack after a game or practice	A small toy, a small piggy bank donation, a trip to the park, a reusable water bottle or extra electronics/screen time
10	A medium toy, a trip to the movies or a favorite meal	A trip to the batting cages, bowling alley or ice skating rink
15	Extra time to play at the end of practice	Tickets to a minor league sport or high school game
20 or more	Take kids out for a healthy meal after a practice	A large sport-related gift, such as a monogrammed bag, an equipment upgrade or tickets to a professional game

Alternatively, parents could consider giving a dollar every time the child remembers to wear his or her mouthguard with a bonus for every five instances.

The Benefit:

A split second is all it takes for a child's beautiful smile - and good oral health - to be forever changed by a line drive or a slip on the balance beam. Learning that it's important to protect their pearly whites, not to mention their lips, gums and jaws, is a lesson that will last a lifetime.

the challenges

challenge 4

think about your drink

The Challenge:

Most kids know that cookies and candies aren't good choices for teeth, but they may not realize that even the drinks they sip can have a big impact on their smiles. Have a discussion with children about why water and plain milk are healthier choices than sugary or acidic drinks such as chocolate milk, soda and sports drinks. Then, challenge them to swap one drink for a healthier choice every day for a week. It's as easy as choosing a carton of plain milk instead of chocolate milk at lunch!

think about your drink
Make healthier choices before you pour.

You've probably heard the saying "You are what you eat" - and that goes for what you drink, too! Over the next week, think about what you pour into your glass, cup or reusable bottle. Could you trade that drink for something that's better for your teeth, like water or milk? If so, swap your beverage for something more smile-friendly. Challenge yourself to make one trade every day for a week!

There are 10 teaspoons of sugar in a glass of juice or can of soda.

Actual size teaspoon $\times 10$

Sun	☺
Mon	☺
Tue	☺
Wed	☺
Thu	☺
Fri	☺
Sat	☺

sip smart for a healthy smile

You probably already know that sugary foods are bad for your teeth, but have you ever stopped to think about your drinks? Beverages such as juice, soda and even sports drinks contain ingredients that aren't so smile-friendly. Check out these beverages that are good to drink, and find out about a few you should rethink.

Drink!	Rethink!
Plain milk Getting milk gives you a dose of calcium, a nutrient that helps build strong teeth and bones. Growing kids need lots of calcium - three to four servings daily.	Soda Sugary drinks, like soda, can cause tooth decay because the sugar can turn into acids that dissolve tooth enamel. Diet soda should also be avoided. Even though diet soda is usually sugar-free, it still contains acids that harm your tooth enamel.
Tap water If you from the faucet is a great choice because it often contains fluoride, a mineral that gives teeth extra protection. Kids ages 6-16 should drink 8 cups of water daily, and kids ages 9-13 need up to 8 cups! Swapping sugary beverages for water helps you get the amount you need.	Sports drinks Sip! Sip! Sip! Sports drinks are both sugary and acidic - a combination that's not great for your teeth. If you need to hydrate after a sports practice or game, choose water instead.
Flavored water If you think plain water is boring, try adding a couple of strawberries or cucumber slices. You can also add a little splash of 100 percent fruit juice for some extra flavor. Or try sparkling water for some fun!	Fruit juice While fruit is good for you, fruit juice contains a lot of natural sugar. Instead of drinking fruit juice, it's better to enjoy the whole fruit.

Choosing drinks like water and milk instead of soda and juice is a healthy choice for your smile and your body!
Be sure to pick the smart sips.

the challenges

challenge 4

think about your drink

The Rewards:

At the end of the week, tally how many times children made healthy swaps. Then reward them based on the total number of times a healthy decision was made.

Teachers may want to tally the total number of swaps the whole class achieves and adjust the award system as needed. For example, if everyone in a class of 25 makes all seven drink swaps, that's 175 swaps. If the class makes 150 swaps or more, they could get to listen to music while they're working or read outside on a nice day.

Swaps	Reward
7	A trip to the movies, a piggy bank contribution or a medium-size toy
5-6	A small toy, a new book, a special craft day or a small piggy bank contribution
3-4	Sugar-free gum, stickers, a reusable water bottle, pencils or erasers
1-2	A new toothbrush and fun flavored toothpaste

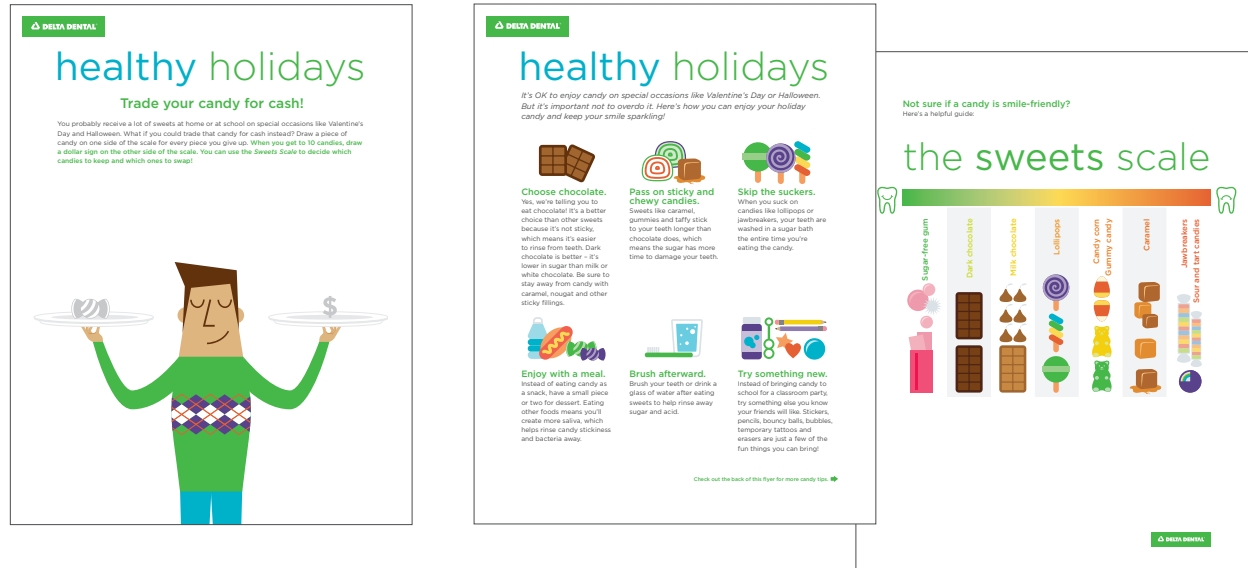
The Benefit:

Knowing which beverages are the most beneficial to oral health - and being able to make those choices on their own - will help children avoid extra sugar. This will help prevent cavities and tooth decay and will result in better overall health as well.

the challenges

challenge 5

healthy holidays



The Challenge:

It's not realistic to expect kids to avoid sweets all the time. Special occasions such as Valentine's Day and Halloween are perfect times to let children cut loose a little when it comes to candy. But it's important to make sure they don't overdo it.

Help children choose a few favorite pieces of candy to enjoy, then offer to trade the rest for cash! Check out our *Sweets Scale* to determine which candies are the most smile-friendly.

the challenges

challenge 5

healthy holidays

The Rewards:

Some schools allow children to bring in treats for classroom celebrations. **Parents**, if your child opts to bring a non-candy treat, such as stickers, small toys, pencils or plastic jewelry, a bonus donation to his or her piggy bank may be in order! **Teachers**, if the kids choose to go candy-free as a class, offer them a reward at the party, such as a movie, a game or a craft day.

Pieces of Candy	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
Reward	\$1	\$2	\$3	\$4	\$5	\$6	\$7	\$8	\$10

optional

Taking non-candy treats to school: \$5

Reward an additional 10 cents for each jawbreaker or sour candy.

The Benefit:

Avoiding the avalanche of sugary treats that come with certain holidays will help keep cavities and tooth decay away. It's also helpful for kids to know that it's OK to enjoy sweets in moderation, especially if they know which candies are safest for teeth and how to mitigate the damage by brushing, flossing or rinsing with water afterward.

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