

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention: Health, Lifestyle and Education Editors and Reporters

When your child is away, watch out for tooth decay

Remind kids about good oral hygiene habits before they leave for camp this summer

Toronto, ON - The Ontario Dental Association (ODA) is asking parents to put oral health at the top of their kids' camp preparation list. An oral care kit should be on the packing list, complete with a toothbrush, fluoride toothpaste and dental floss.

"It's important for parents to remind their children about good oral hygiene habits to prevent tooth decay, as kids may have other things on their minds while away at camp," said Dr. Lynn Tomkins, President of the ODA. "Tooth decay is the number one chronic childhood disease, five times more common than asthma in children."

The ODA wants to suggest to parents and kids some tips for good oral hygiene:

- Pack a new toothbrush. Make tooth brushing fun by asking your child to pick out his/her own toothbrush. A new toothbrush should be used every three months.
- Pack a toothpaste containing fluoride. Fluoride helps to combat tooth decay.
- Brush teeth at least twice daily, for two to three minutes. Make sure you brush every part of your teeth in a gentle, circular motion.
- Floss teeth at least once a day. Flossing cleans between your teeth and below the gum line, areas that your toothbrush can't reach. If you don't floss, up to 35 percent of your tooth surface is not cleaned.
- Make sure kids know about healthy snack options.

"These tips are great for kids and parents to maintain good oral health," said Dr. Tomkins. "A painful cavity is the quickest way to dampen summer fun while away at camp. Have fun this summer. Don't forget to write home, and don't forget your teeth!"

An excellent resource centre for kids and parents is Kids' Zone at www.youroralhealth.ca. It encourages kids to learn more about their own oral health through fun activities that help to explain proper dental hygiene.

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