



# Gerstenmaier

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

*from day one*



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## Summer Treats & Healthy Teeth

Even though it's almost time for your kids to go back to school, the last weeks of summer are usually filled with all kinds of activities that come with snacks like trips to the pool, family road trips, amusement parks, and picnics. It's a great time to reinforcing healthy choices and habits that will keep their smile clean and bright well into the school year.



Here are some tips to make sure dental hygiene doesn't slack off as summer winds down:

- *Sweets as treats:* Ice-cold sweets like slushies, ice cream, and snow cones sure sound refreshing on a hot day, but the truth is they're packed with so much sugar that a little sweat might ultimately be preferable. Keep the sweets as rare treats and you're kids will enjoy them more without having to worry.
- *Watch out for sugar.* It doesn't have to taste sweet for it to contain a lot of sugar! Check the ingredients list as many items unexpectedly contain added sugar, such as sport drinks and prepackaged foods. Instead of something sugary sweet, give your kids something high in protein like cheese or nuts, or maybe something more refreshing like celery, which has high water content.
- *Quench thirst, protect teeth:* Whether you're sitting at the ballpark or poolside, it's always tempting for parents and kids to cool off with a cold soda, but water should always remain the primary source of hydration. Why? Because it's the best and most effective! Water promotes salivation



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and helps to reduce acids that accumulate in the mouth that would gradually erode otherwise healthy enamel.

- *Brushing after snacking:* With all these end of summer sweets and treats it's as important as ever to brush between snacks to keep those teeth sparkly white!

It's easy to relax on routine when the weather is nice and it's especially tempting to indulge in cold, sugary beverages and sweet snacks, but take advantage of the time off that's left before school starts!

Use it to make sure your kids get back into the swing of healthy habits, so that it's one less thing to stress about when the homework starts coming in. Schedule a check-up and we'll make sure your kids start their first day back to class with a beautiful smile.

## What Time Is It? It's Time To Spit!

Just because your child has been brushing independently for awhile doesn't mean that you should stop supervising - especially if you notice that he or she isn't really spitting much of the excess toothpaste back out. In fact, the ADA recommends that all children be monitored while brushing at least until the age of 6.



The American Dental Association (ADA) also recommends that children ages 2 and older use fluoride toothpaste when brushing and strongly encourages parents to watch as swallowing excessive amounts can be toxic, resulting in oral problems and other health complications. If you notice that your child is swallowing more than spitting, intervene and demonstrate how to properly brush and spit using the following steps:

1. Start by using an ADA approved fluoride toothpaste - it will bear the association's seal of approval on its label.
2. Use only a pea-sized amount, as this will minimize the amount of fluoride that could potentially be swallowed.
3. Play a "Simon Says" or "Follow the Leader" style game where you begin demonstrating how to brush (gentle, short, circular strokes on all surfaces of the teeth), then spitting out excess toothpaste into the sink. Rinse any that still remains out with water and spit again. You also try and compete to see who can spit out the most toothpaste after brushing!



The ADA recommends that you brush for at least two minutes. Make brushing, spitting, and rinsing fun by setting a timer for each stage. When it's time to spit, just call it out!

Healthy oral hygiene habits should be fun, not boring, and by making it something to get excited about, your kids will be rushing to pick up the brush in no time.

## About Our Practice

Gerstenmaier Pediatric Dentistry is a family owned practice located in Akron, Ohio. From day one, we have provided children, adolescents, families and adults with special needs with the right care at the right time -- ensuring positive dental experiences that last a lifetime and bring bright and happy smiles to every patient.