

# Dentistry for Kids

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## A Word From The Tooth Fairy<sup>2</sup>

Produced to improve your dental health and awareness

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from the dentists



### “Is My Child Ready For Braces?”



This is a question that we are asked daily. Unfortunately, the answer isn't a simple yes or no and depends upon many factors. There are many different types of orthodontic problems. Some problems respond best to an early phase of treatment (pre-puberty) while children are still growing. Other problems are treated at a later time, when all the permanent teeth have erupted. This is why the *American Association of Orthodontists* recommends the first orthodontic evaluation around age 7 or 8. It is also important to understand that even though your child's teeth may be ready for braces, he or she may

not be mature enough to handle the treatment. Orthodontic treatment requires the ability of a child to sit still for long periods of time and to exhibit a certain level of cooperation.

More importantly, your child's oral hygiene must weigh heavily in our decision to whether your child is ready to start orthodontic treatment. Teeth are difficult enough to keep clean without braces. Adding brackets and wires makes it even more difficult. We, at *Dentistry for Kids*, feel strongly that your child must have good oral hygiene habits before the orthodontic process begins! In approximately 90% of cases this means that your child will need your help with their oral home care while in braces! Even if they are brushing well, alone; at the very least he or she will need some assistance with flossing – which needs to be done around and under wires. This is difficult as it requires

tremendous manual dexterity which many children don't possess until their teens. In addition to the extra time and help by an adult, extra fluoride products such as rinses or pastes will need to be purchased during orthodontic treatment. It is very common that we see children that have braces or orthodontic appliances more frequently than twice per year – sometimes 3 or 4 times per year. Taking care of braces is no easy task! Careful consideration by parents should be taken when considering this decision!

Orthodontic treatment is a big commitment both in time and money!! This is a commitment for children AND parents! We certainly need you on board and are happy to talk with you any time about what your expectations are, your needs are, and what you desire for your child. We are here to help and want only the best for your children!

### Spotlight on Staff - Chris Bartholomey

Chris Bartholomey and Dr. Kohn have worked together since Dr. Kohn began practicing as a pediatric dentist in 1992 in Catonsville, MD. They have always worked well together and have become friends over the last 20 years! Chris currently resides in Catonsville and enjoys gardening and cooking out ... as well as fun drinks with umbrellas! She shares her home with her two big dogs, Cruise and Annie.

In her free time, Chris likes to spend time with her grandchildren – of which she now has five! Her daughter has one daughter and her son has four sons!

Chris enjoys working with people, especially those with a sense of humor. She believes that we shouldn't worry about the things we can't control and she likes to get involved and help out with worthwhile causes.

**HER MOTO IN LIFE IS: LIFE IS TOO SHORT – DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF!**





# Is your child 8 going on 18?!! ...like Lucy D.

Believe it or not, most children around the age of 8 may still need help with their oral home care – AND some kids need help until they are even older. Studies show that most children don't develop good manual dexterity or hand skills until around the age of 10. A helpful hint that we use to help evaluate your child's hand skills is to evaluate their handwriting. Children who have messy handwriting or those who cannot stay in the lines when coloring, do not have good manual control. You may notice that your child's cursive writing is wavy and not fluid and sharp like that of an adult. This translates very well to how they control their toothbrush. Around the age of 10 this will start to improve as their control and manual dexterity improves dramatically. It is simply a matter of time. Some children will improve earlier and these kids are usually good brushers while others may be late and need help for longer. We also have some patients that have dexterity problems and may receive occupational therapy or handwriting tutoring – these kids generally take longer to become decent brushers and we need you to be aware of this. The kids are not doing anything wrong – they simply cannot do better.

For these reasons, we recommend parents help with the brushing and flossing until children can do an adequate job on their own. This is where it gets tricky!! Kids don't like their parents to help – this can become a bone of contention – we know - we have all been there with our own kids. The kids want to do everything by themselves and be independent. While we don't want to discourage independence, we don't want their dental health to suffer. Since night time is the most important time in a 24 hour period to remove plaque, this is the time we want you to help your kids with brushing and flossing. In the morning, they can do it on their own. Sometimes just this compromise will work for many kids – a sort of your turn, my turn approach.

But, if all else fails – We have developed something new that may be helpful to you as parents! We now have a "CONTRACT" for you and your child to sign. We hope that this will aid in the dilemma of who should brush the teeth and when. We have designed this contract, along with a magnet aid as a visual daily reminder of the importance of clean healthy teeth. It's a fun way to get cooperation! Feel free to ask us about it on your next visit!!



## Staff goes to the BIG Apple!

Dr. Kohn, Dr. Evancho and five other staff members traveled to New York City over the Memorial Day weekend for the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) annual meeting. While there, they were able to take advantage of the many courses offered and networked with other pediatric dental teams. They even squeezed in some time for shopping and a show! A good time was had by all...and the staff was most appreciative to Dr. Kohn for such a fabulous experience!

M&M store in New York



Pictured (in order): Bekah, Danielle, Dr. Kohn, Courtney and the M&M guy!

# Teenagers...

## Today...much different than issues facing teenagers in the past.

Today's teenagers are putting themselves at higher risks for oral problems on a daily basis due to the many poor choices they are making. We've written before about the sugar in sports drinks, coffees and candies but other oral concerns that face us at *Dentistry for kids* are oral piercing and tobacco use.

Many parents are actually against oral piercing. However, in many states, once a child turns 18, parental permission is no longer needed in order to "get pierced." Our main concern is not cosmetic, but rather a true health concern. Oral piercing, unfortunately, can be physically dangerous. In some instances, tongue piercings have led to swelling of the tongue to such an extent as to close off the airway and compromise breathing. Besides the pain involved, piercing the tongue can also lead to nerve damage –

which can be permanent and cause speech problems. Tongue, lip or cheek piercing can lead to severe infections of not only the oral cavity, but of the head, neck and brain! Besides the infection risks, the labrets/dumbbells that are worn, can damage teeth, gums and supporting bone. These side effects are great and all types of oral piercing should be avoided!

Smoking and smokeless tobacco (also known as chew or snuff) is also a big problem with teens today. Unfortunately, even with all the anti-tobacco campaigns, smoking and chewing is still considered "cool" by many teens. While most people are aware of the dangers associated with smoking, many are ignorant to the fact that smokeless tobacco is actually more prone to cause oral cancers! Smokeless tobacco contains small fiberglass particles that actually cut the tissues and allow the harmful chemicals to enter the bloodstream more rapidly. Teens tend to choose smokeless tobacco over smoking cigarettes, because it can be hidden more easily from parents and teachers and leaves no odor behind.

*If you have concerns about dangerous choices your child or teen is making, feel free to talk with us. We would be happy to talk with you and/or your child and provide appropriate scientific literature if needed.*

## Tooth Tissues ... Spiffies... Xylitol Wipes...

### What? ... Did we have these when we were babies?

The answer is "no". We did not.

Most of us don't even remember our mothers even brushing our teeth for us?...let alone flossing!...but wiping our baby teeth with xylitol wipes? Not hardly!

#### **So – why now? Why xylitol wipes? Where do we get them?...**

Using xylitol wipes on your baby's teeth or gums can actually be very beneficial. Xylitol is a natural ingredient that prevents cavities. It is found in the fibers of many fruits and vegetables. Xylitol also inhibits bacteria that contribute to the formation of tooth decay. Besides the xylitol, there are many advantages to cleaning the mouth and teeth. At times, it may be easier or more convenient to wipe the teeth instead of brushing the teeth – especially when you are "out and about." Wiping teeth and gums allows your baby will get used to you putting your fingers in his/her mouth at an early age - even before they have any teeth. This oral stimulation may make it easier for you later when it is time to actually introduce the toothbrush.

Another reason these wipes are helpful is their ability to clean. If milk or formula from a bottle or breast stays on the teeth, the process of early childhood

decay can begin. Dental cavities are the most common childhood disease that exists – even though it is very much preventable. While most adults and older children are experiencing fewer cavities, the children ages 2-5 are actually the highest risk group and are experiencing more cavities! The anti-cavity properties of the xylitol can help decrease your child's decay.

There are many other ways that we can reduce this rising decay rate among young children. These include: altering diet and decreasing sugar intake, adding fluoride in toothpastes or rinses, and most important - parent involvement with home care. You, as a parent, have the primary responsibility of cleaning the teeth of your young children who cannot do this well on their own – they just have NOT developed the manual skills yet. You can also begin "cleaning" these little mouths early including cleaning the teeth as soon as they erupt or grow in! The teeth/mouth should be cleaned by wiping the baby's gums with a wet washcloth, clean gauze, or a xylitol wipe after each feeding. At the very least, this should be done once daily - preferably at night - before bedtime and after the last



bit of food or drink (besides water) is given to your child. Remember babies and toddlers should finish bottles completely before nap or bedtime. Bottles or sippy cups should NEVER go to bed with these youngsters – unless they contain ONLY PLAIN WATER. And remember; never, ever dip a pacifier in sugar, honey, or juice!

The mouth is the first step in nutrition. Baby teeth are very important! These teeth help in the development of speech and hold space for adult teeth.

Xylitol wipes come in several varieties. Two major brands are *Spiffies*<sup>™</sup> and *My Dentist's Choice*<sup>™</sup> *Tooth Tissues*<sup>™</sup>. Please ask for a sample when you are visiting our office. These brands can be found in stores or they can be ordered online. They come in various flavors that kids love.

If you have any further questions about infant oral health or xylitol wipes, please contact our office!



## Dr. Kohn and staff participated in the Sunshine's Angels 5K on Sunday, July 17th!

Dr. Kohn and some of our staff from the office participated in the Sunshine's Angels 5K on Sunday, July 17th. Dr. Kohn and Dentistry for Kids as well as Dr. Selnick, our partner in Orthodontics, are supporters of the charity Sunshine's Angels Foundation. Sunshine's Angels is the creation of Vicki Bull. This non-profit organization was founded in 2010 to benefit grief stricken children.

Vicki Bull is the mother of Sunshine Royston. On September 13th, 2008, Sunshine was tragically killed in a limousine accident one week before she was to be married. She left behind three small children - age 5 years, 3 years, and 8 months - a groom, and a grieving family.

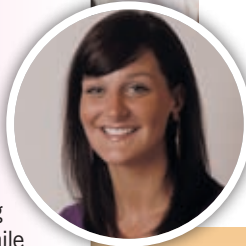
Although the grieving process continues, Vicki, from whom Sunshine no doubt obtained her big heart, wants to reach out and help others. The goal is to help children, like her very own grandchildren, who, at a very young age, have experienced trauma or grief.

Feel free to check out their website:  
[www.sunshinesangels.com](http://www.sunshinesangels.com)

## Congratulations Samie!

With mixed emotions, we say goodbye to our wonderful, smiling Samie! You may be used to seeing her as Snow White from last Halloween. You may also remember her tall frame at the front desk or talking with her on the phone. Samie was accepted to nursing school, something she had been working on while working full time for Dentistry for Kids, and started courses at Carroll County Community College the end of August. We hope to see Samie from time to time on Saturdays or when she has school vacations! Join us in wishing her well!

*Thank you "Nurse" Samie for all your help – good luck!*



## NEW PRODUCT UPDATE

Finally – a "sweet tasting" toothpaste that has tartar control ingredients! Crest® Pro-Health for Me!™ is here! Many "Adult" tartar control toothpastes – are too "spicy" for kids – or at least that is what they tell us. The active ingredient in this new product is disodium pyrophosphate. This is a normal component of human body fluid that prevents the formation of crystals that can eventually become tartar. This new toothpaste is actually for kids of all ages (and even adults!) Don't be fooled by the box- that states this paste is for kids 8-12. As in all toothpastes - the amount of fluoride is the same in Crest Pro-Health For Me as it is in adult Crest products. In the US the amount of fluoride in fluoride containing toothpaste is the same regardless if it says adult or child.

*We are recommending this new product for those kids that accumulate a lot of calculus otherwise known as tartar.*

## Dentistry for Kids

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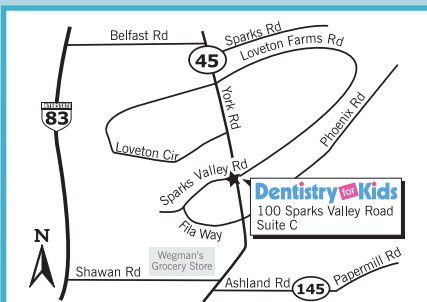
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## Send us Your Funny Tooth Stories!!

We hear funny stories every day about how our patients get their loose teeth out – but this one – takes the cake!!!

### This was told to us by Garrett H.:

When Garrett discovered that he had a loose tooth, he wiggled and wiggled...but it wouldn't come out – so...  
 ...he decided to tie one end of a piece of floss to the tooth and then tie the other end of the floss to a nerf gun nerf bullet...and then...boom! He shot the nerf gun. The bullet did go flying, but unfortunately the floss slipped off the tooth. He tried three times, but still didn't get the tooth out! Good try Garrett – and thanks for sharing your story!!

If you have any crazy "how I got my loose tooth out" stories, please send them to us – they may make big news in our next newsletter!!

