



3 - 5 YEARS

Smile Shoppe
Pediatric Dentistry

Nervous Child? We Can Help!



Got a nervous child on the day of your appointment? Don't worry. Children's moods can change constantly and that's ok! As pediatric dentists, we receive extensive training in creating an atmosphere where your child can comfortably receive treatment. Because of our training, we are able to choose the right techniques to appropriately manage each child's behavior. For an especially worried child, we offer in-office sedation, including oral sedation protocols. We also use a nurse anesthetist for more complicated cases.

For patients with special healthcare needs and very young children, we offer general anesthesia in a hospital setting. Our goal is the same for each child - a successful outcome in a safe environment.

Sugar & Tooth Decay

Can too much sugar in your child's diet cause tooth decay? Definitely! The foods your child eats and poor oral hygiene habits are directly related to cavities and cause tooth decay! Every second that goes by, bacteria feed on the sugars in your child's mouth. When kids eat starchy food or simple sugars, like candy or soda, sugar is left behind on their teeth. And bacteria - like us - love to eat sugar. Unfortunately, as bacteria eat, they create acidic waste. Once the bacteria take over and feed on sugars in your child's mouth, they can produce enough acid to cause tooth decay. Left untreated, tooth decay can continue to wear down the tooth, resulting in the need for a filling, root canal, and other unpleasant dental treatment.

Daily Dental Hygiene

So how can you prevent decay and avoid a root canal for your child? Basically, the less sugar and starch you allow your child to eat, the less likely bacteria can thrive, grow, and produce decay causing acids. Plus, when you brush and floss your child's teeth every day, you are interrupting the bacteria's feast! Simple dental hygiene removes the colonizing bacteria, making them incapable of producing enough acid to cause havoc in your child's mouth.

Diet - Can It Affect Your Child's Teeth?

You already know that diet can have a huge impact on your child's overall health. Eating the right foods can nourish the body, help maintain a healthy weight, and keep diseases at bay. But can your child's diet also impact the teeth? Absolutely! The sugar from food and drinks creates a breeding ground of bacteria in your child's mouth. Bacteria then produce acids that break down tooth enamel, which leads to tooth decay and cavities. With simple teeth cleanings and dental fillings, we can stop cavities from becoming worse. But if left untreated, your child may require more serious treatment, like a pulpectomy or tooth extraction. During a pulpectomy, we will remove the diseased pulp tissue and disinfect the remaining nerve tissue.

Avoiding A Pulpectomy

Beyond dental treatment, you can help ensure your child's mouth stays healthy. It all starts with a good diet full of fresh fruits and veggies and less sugar. Avoid sugar in the form of soda, juice and sports drinks, and help your child eat fewer starchy snacks, like crackers and potato chips. These snacks stick to the teeth, producing more sugar in the mouth. Try snacks such as fresh fruit, veggie sticks, yogurt, or cheese. You can also try pure chocolate if your child wants something sweet. It does not stick to the teeth but melts off of the grooves. If your child does eat chips or desserts, make sure they drink water to wash food particles off of their teeth. To read more about your child's diet and oral health, click [here](#).

Why Pediatric Dentistry?

Pediatric dentistry is a type of dentistry that focuses on kids' overall oral health. From infants and toddlers to older children and teens, our pediatric dentists are trained to give your child the right dental care in a comfortable environment.

What Are Pediatric Dentists?

A pediatric dentist is similar to a pediatrician. Pediatric dentists must take additional training to understand the best ways to protect your child's oral health. They also stay current on the latest technology and practices. All dentists must take four years of college and four years of general dental school. In addition, pediatric dentists also receive two to three years of training in both children's hospitals and dental schools.

What Is A Board-Certified Pediatric Dentist?

Board-certified dentists choose to take extra steps to learn how to provide a higher level of care. To become certified, they must complete additional courses to stay current in the latest advancements in pediatric dentistry. All of our pediatric dentists are board certified or are board eligible, which means they are awaiting their final certification. At Smile Shoppe Pediatric Dentistry, our pediatric dentists are specially trained to give your children the customized care they need. We love working with kids to create healthy habits for life. Why go anywhere else? For more information, click [here](#).

About Brushing & Flossing

When it comes to brushing and flossing, your child's hands and mouth are different from yours. Kids need toothbrushes that are designed to fit inside their smaller mouths and tiny hands. Of course, everyone should purchase a brush with soft, round bristles to ensure gentle cleaning. You should also buy a new brush approximately every three months.

Dental Cleaning For Kids

Dental hygiene is important to keep your child's teeth healthy and cavity free. Now that your child has grown out of the toddler stage, they are probably brushing on their own. However, we recommend you still help brush your child's teeth until age 6 or 7 to keep the hard-to-reach areas clean.

To ensure proper teeth cleaning & plaque reduction:

- Hold the brush at a 45-degree angle facing the teeth & gums
- Brush in small, gentle circles about half a tooth wide
- Brush the inner & outer surface of each tooth
- Brush the chewing surfaces of each tooth, holding the brush flat on top of the teeth
- Gently brush the tongue to remove food particles
- Floss gently between teeth every day

Sealant - Protecting Against Plaque

A sealant is a great way to protect against decay and cavities for years to come. So what is a sealant? Sealants are plastic resins that bond and harden onto tiny grooves on the tooth's surface, creating a barrier against plaque and bacteria.

How Can Sealants Help?

Tooth decay is often the worst on the tops of the back teeth. After we seal your child's tooth, the small grooves on the teeth become smooth and are less likely to harbor plaque, making brushing easier and more effective against tooth decay for up to three to five years. With sealants, your child is more likely to stay cavity free and avoid dental fillings. If your child is prone to cavities, contact us to learn more about sealants!

Thumbsucking Can Be Bad

Is thumbsucking harmful after a certain age? In short, the answer is yes. It is normal for infants to suck their fingers or thumbs, and many babies use pacifiers without problems! So why is it bad? Prolonged thumb or finger sucking and pacifier use can cause teeth to come in crooked or bite problems. If your child continues this habit past age 3, we recommend a professional evaluation. At Smile Shoppe Pediatric Dentistry, we will be glad to suggest ways to address a prolonged thumbsucking, finger sucking, or pacifier habit.

Break The Habit

- Find a good time when your child is happy & not stressed.
- Encourage your child with positive reinforcement. Praise your child when they are not sucking their thumb, finger, or pacifier.
- Create a rewards system with small incentives to encourage your child to stick with it!

If you think your child may have bite problems, we also offer orthodontics services.

Are Cavities Contagious?

In a way, you can catch cavities! But regular teeth cleanings can help. You can prevent cavities from even forming! At Smile Shoppe Pediatric Dentistry, we believe you should bring your baby in early. We like to see children for a cleaning six months after the first tooth erupts. This is so we can ensure your baby's teeth come in correctly and remain cavity-free.

Preventing Cavities

A cavity needs a vulnerable tooth, sugar, and bacteria. We all have some bacteria in our mouths. But some of us have more cavity causing bacteria than others. Anyone who has a cavity in their mouth has a higher level of bacteria that produces cavities. When people share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes and other items, they can pass bacteria on to others. Children do not have this bacteria when they are born. But they can get it from a parent, caregiver, or even another child. We can find signs of cavity-producing bacteria at our office before the child's first birthday! With a simple teeth cleaning, we can remove plaque, provide dental fillings, and help to reduce cavity-causing bacteria. To read more on how to avoid cavities, go [here](#).