



# Helping Hands

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## 6-9 YEARS OLD

### MIXED DENTITION

At approximately age 6, your child will begin to lose their baby teeth. Again, there is a wide range in which this process begins to occur. Your child will erupt 4 upper front incisors, 4 lower front incisors when the front teeth are lost. Your child will also erupt four additional permanent molars that will come in behind the last of their primary (baby) molars. These adult teeth usually have more of a yellow shade due to the different development structure of the teeth.

### CARE

Your child should be taking on more responsibility with their daily brushing and flossing. We still recommend adult assistance, at a minimum of once daily, until your child can remove the majority of plaque from their teeth on a consistent basis. Flossing with either dental floss or hand held flossers should be used daily. Your child should be using a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste on their toothbrush twice a day when brushing. The excess toothpaste should simply be spit out of the mouth and not rinsed with water, as this can decrease its protective benefit.

### DIET

Your child should be eating three meals a day and two snacks (if desired), with any beverages other than water being limited to these times. The frequency of carbohydrate exposure is more strongly linked to the progression of dental decay at this time than the type of carbohydrates. These periods of time in between meals and snacks will allow your child's body to do its share in cavity prevention by allowing the saliva to rinse away the carbohydrates and equalize the acid levels in the mouth to a healthy environment. Some healthy snack options include: Cheeses, nuts, fresh fruits and vegetables, popcorn, solid chocolates, ice cream, and yogurt. Try to steer clear of crackers, dried fruits, gummy fruit snacks, sticky candy and mints, sugar gum, suckers, sodas and sports drinks.

### SEALANTS

Dental sealants are a preventive measure that we recommend for your child's first permanent molars. Sealants help protect the deep grooves of the back permanent teeth from sugars, plaque and acid. Having sealants is a simple procedure that does not require any use of local anesthesia.

### INJURY PREVENTION

We recommend discussing the appropriate mouthguard, and its use, with your pediatric dentist as soon as your child's permanent teeth begin to erupt. Your child should use a mouthguard on a regular basis when participating in athletic activities to help prevent traumatic injuries to their permanent teeth.

### ROUTINE DENTAL CARE

At this age, we will take two anterior x-rays of the upper front and lower front teeth, allowing us to see your child's developing front teeth. We may also take two bitewing radiographs to check for any cavities between back teeth that are touching together to check for dental decay that we are not visibly able to see with an examination alone. The bitewing radiographs are then, typically taken on a twelve month interval. At these appointments, we try to build on the patient's previous visits and allow them to sit in the dental chair and use a dental hanpiece for their cleaning.