

# Back-to-School is Exam Time

## A trip to the dentist is as important as school supplies.

For young people, a trip to the dentist spells a happy smile. Exams can catch cavities before they start. And they can help prevent tooth decay. Your child's visit will likely include a cleaning and x-rays, called bitewings, with the exam. Fluoride treatments and sealants may also be suggested to help prevent decay. (Ask your dentist about covered benefits.)

## Packing Their Lunchbox

These foods are good to go. Choose ABCs—apples, berries, celery—and other crunchy fruits and veggies. They're good with dip, cheddar cheese, cream cheese, hummus, and yogurt. Limit foods with sugar and starch (bagels, bread, muffins). These encourage bacteria growth.<sup>1</sup>

## Helping with Homework

Your child's visit to the dentist is just one part of maintaining a healthy smile. There's also homework! But the good news is that it takes just five minutes every day: brushing twice a day for two minutes plus about a minute of flossing. Kids can floss after any meal, though it's best before brushing. Start their healthy habits early. If you have trouble motivating your child, try these tips:

- **Brush together.**  
If it's a family affair, everyone wins.
- **Let them choose.**  
A fancy ADA-approved toothbrush can make it personal
- **Give rewards.**  
Place a gold star on the calendar for every day of tooth homework completed.
- **Time it.**  
Use a sand timer, a phone app, or a favorite two-minute song.
- **Make it easy.**  
Flossing can be hard for little fingers. You can help or get disposable flossers in fun colors. This way, children learn to do it themselves.



## Easy as 1-2-3

Having good oral health is easy. Just remember these three things:

1. Visit the dentist regularly.
2. Brush twice a day and floss once a day.
3. Eat healthy foods.

The only drills your kids should face should be on the whiteboard.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.colgate.com/en-us/oral-health/basics/nutrition-and-oral-health/tasty-dental-care-for-kids-seven-healthy-snacks-for-healthy-teeth-1013>, accessed November 2019.

*Material discussed is meant for general informational purposes only and is not to be construed as medical advice. Although the information has been gathered from sources believed to be reliable, please note that individual situations can vary. You should always consult a licensed professional when making decisions concerning eye health care.*