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# The Lakes Family Dental

## Special Interest Articles:

- You can Prevent Cavities
- Flouride
- Snacks
- Visit your Dentist Regularly
- Sealants

*Be the Change you want to see in the world.*

*~ Ghandi*

*God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know it's me.*

*Author Unknown*

*The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra.*

*Jimmy Johnson*

## You Can Prevent Cavities

**Cavities:** Many of us remember sweating through the poking and prodding of the dental exam. We prayed that he would not find cavities that would require the use of the dreaded needle or drill. Armed with the right knowledge and proper home dental care you can rest at ease and fear cavities no more.

### What Causes Cavities?

When it comes to cavities, bacteria are public enemy number #1. Our mouths, teeth and toothbrushes are full of bacteria, which settle on our teeth in plaque, a goo of proteins, saliva, and food debris. Violight can remove the bacteria from our toothbrushes but our teeth are a problem. Here bacteria devour food particles left on our teeth. Ungrateful guests, these bacteria produce acid as a by-product of their feasting. This acid eats into the tooth enamel creating cavities.

### What Can You Do To Reduce Your Chances of Getting Cavities?

Good oral hygiene significantly reduces your risk of getting cavities. Brushing and the use of a water pick can help diminish your chance

of cavities. The Hydrabrush helps you do both at the same time! Brushing removes bacteria as well as the food debris bacteria feed on. When brushing it is crucial to brush all tooth surfaces which takes at least 2-3 minutes. Unfortunately, most people only brush for less than 45 seconds, missing a large percentage of their tooth surfaces.

Flossing everyday is crucial to preventing cavities. Flossing reaches nearly 35 percent of your mouth that your toothbrush can not reach. In these areas, bacteria live happily pouring out cavity causing acid. Remember brushing without flossing is like taking a shower and only washing two thirds of your body. The remaining third remains dirty!

In addition to practicing good oral hygiene, there are other things you can do to reduce your risk of getting cavities:

### To Prevent Cavities, Watch What You Eat

Bacteria are particularly fond of foods containing sugars and carbohydrates. These foods provide bacteria with energy to grow, reproduce, and create enamel-eating acid. A special favorite of bacteria are foods that tend to stick to teeth like peanut butter, caramel, and honey. When stuck to teeth these foods are not cleared by

chewing and swallowing. Consequently, they provide bacteria with a long lasting food source from which to make acid.

When you eat meals or snacks containing large amounts sugars, carbohydrates, or "sticky" foods which tend to get stuck to teeth, make sure to follow the meal with water to help wash off food particles remaining on teeth. If possible, brush your teeth immediately after the meal.

### Use Fluoride to Prevent Cavities

Fluoride is a wonder of modern dentistry. Fluoride incorporates itself into tooth enamel strengthening the enamel and making it more resistant to acid attacks. Most adults receive adequate amounts of fluoride in their toothpastes. Children often receive adequate amounts in their drinking water. If your water is not flouridated, you may want to consult your pediatrician to see about flouride supplements.

### To Prevent Cavities, Watch the Timing of Snack

The timing of your snacks is crucial to preventing cavities. The acid produced by bacteria is



**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!**



*“Freedom is nothing else but  
a chance to be better.”*

*~ Albert Camus*

*Time you enjoy wasting, was  
not wasted.*

*~ John Lennon*

*All who have accomplished  
great things have had a great  
aim; have fixed their gaze on  
a goal which was high, one  
which sometimes seemed  
impossible.*

*~ Orison Swett Marden*

neutralized by saliva and then cleared from the mouth. After the acid is cleared minerals in saliva crystallize on the enamel to begin to repair areas damaged by the acid.

Larger intervals between meals provide more opportunity for acid to be neutralized and more time for the acid damage to be repaired. Frequent snacks, however, provide for a constant acid attack and provide less time for tooth repair.

This explains why snacks eaten with a meal are better for teeth than snacks eaten between meals. A candy bar eaten with a meal, for example, is less likely to contribute to cavity formation than a candy bar eaten as a snack between meals.

This also explains why fewer larger sized meals are better for teeth than more frequent smaller sized meals. Likewise, sipping on sugar containing liquids through out the day is much more detrimental than drinking sugar containing liquids with a meal.

### **Visit Your Dentist On a Regular Basis**

Dental problems often remain silent creating pain only after significant damage has occurred. Dentists can identify many of these potentially devastating problems before they cause major damage.

Additionally, dentists can detect places in your mouth that you miss when brushing. These areas are prime targets for cavity formation. In areas where

cavities are just beginning to form, dentists can use high concentration fluoride treatments to prevent the need for the dental drills and fillings.

### **Sealing out Tooth decay**

Dental sealants are thin plastic coatings placed over the chewing surfaces of back teeth to protect them from developing caries (tooth decay). Sealants cover the bumpy surfaces and crevices called “pits and fissures.” They keep food and plaque from getting trapped in those spaces.

### **Tooth Decay**

When you eat, bits of food cling to your teeth and can help form plaque, a sticky film that builds up on tooth surfaces. Plaque is made of bacteria, and it produces acid from the food you eat. If that acid attacks your teeth repeatedly, it can eat away at

them and cause tooth decay. Tooth decay is painful, and if it goes untreated, you can develop an infection or may need to have the tooth pulled. If you think you have tooth decay, see your dentist. Only a dentist can treat tooth decay and restore your tooth.

Brushing your teeth twice a day and cleaning between your teeth at least once daily to remove plaque can help prevent tooth decay.

Unfortunately, toothbrush bristles cannot get into the pits and fissures on the

chewing surfaces of premolars and molars (back teeth), which allows plaque to collect in these areas. Because these surfaces grind the food we eat, they are at high risk of developing tooth decay. Sealants can reduce that risk by preventing food and plaque from collecting in the pits and fissures.

### **Dental Sealants**

Dentists apply sealants to the chewing surfaces of back teeth. The sealant goes on as a liquid so it can fill in the pits and fissures. It then quickly hardens to provide a protective covering over the tooth surface. To ensure that the sealant will adhere properly, the dentist needs to prepare the tooth surface. This preparation usually is quick and rarely, if ever, causes any discomfort. The dentist needs to clean and condition the tooth. Once the surface is ready, he or she applies the sealant. Sometimes the dentist uses a curing light to help the sealant harden. Sealants can be applied in one brief visit. As long as sealants remain intact, they can protect the chewing surfaces from decay in children and adults. Sealants are durable and can stand up to daily chewing forces for months or even years. Of course, everyone is different, and the protective coating may wear down at different rates in different people. Seeing your dentist on a regular basis is the best way to ensure that your sealants are in good condition.