Getting Your Kids to Brush Their Teeth

HARRISBURG, Pa., (Feb. 14, 2019) – Every parent knows it is important for their kids to learn healthy dental habits. National Children's Dental Health Month in February is a good time to devise strategies for getting kids to brush every day.

"But what do you do when your child doesn't want to brush and constantly resists your reminders?" said United Concordia Dental's Chief Dental Officer Quinn Dufurrena, D.D.S., J.D. "How much pleading and coaxing can busy parents do before they throw up their hands in frustration?"

The dental solutions partner offers a unique tool, Chomper Chums®, that can help kids embrace brushing as a pleasant, lifetime activity.

Chomper Chums is a colorful, animated mobile app that turns brushing, as well as flossing and rinsing, into a fun game for kids ages 4 to 7. The app features a brushing timer and animal characters that kids can feed by buying food with digital coins they earn.

Chomper Chums has been downloaded more than 90,000 times. Parents and their kids can download it from the App Store or Google Play.

"We want kids to see brushing as a fun activity they feel good about doing," says Dufurrena. "Taking care of your teeth is a lifetime activity, and good habits can start at a young age."

Here are some other strategies Dufurrena recommends for encouraging children to brush:

- **Make it a family activity.** Parents are the most important role models for young children. Brushing your teeth along with them will reinforce the positive message.
- **Incorporate brushing into your bedtime ritual.** Combine brushing with reading favorite books and other regular, predictable nighttime routines.
- **Pay attention to the tools you use.** Make sure your child is using a "fun" toothbrush that he or she has picked out. And give them their own toothpaste. Kids often find adult toothpaste too "spicy."

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, nearly 40 percent of schoolchildren show signs of tooth decay by the time they enter kindergarten. Many of these issues can be prevented by developing good oral care habits at a young age.

"We know how important oral health is to a person's overall wellness," says Dufurrena. "Healthy mouths lead to healthy bodies, and this lesson is just as important for kids as it is for adults."

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