

CAMP HILL, Pa. (Feb.10, 2022) – While new research shows tooth decay is declining in preschool children, United Concordia Dental, a national dental solutions partner, reminds parents and caregivers that starting good dental habits at an early age is key to preventing childhood cavities.

Research findings in the newly-released [Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges](#) report from the National Institutes of Health show the rate of untreated tooth decay in children ages 2 to 5 has declined by nearly 50% over the past 20 years.

Initiatives and programs aimed at improving children's oral health, including first dental visits by age 1, integrating oral health services into medical care, improved access to dental care and new techniques and products have played an important role in reducing untreated tooth decay in preschool children.

"While significant progress has been made over the last two decades, early childhood tooth decay remains one of the most common chronic diseases in children across the United States," said United Concordia Chief Dental Officer Quinn Dufurrena, DDS, JD. "The good news is that tooth decay is largely preventable, so it's important parents and caregivers give children the healthiest start possible by managing their dental care with good oral hygiene habits from birth."

To decrease the risk of tooth decay and keep your child's teeth healthy, follow these tips:

- Wipe your baby's gums twice a day with a soft, clean cloth.
- Talk to your dentist about putting fluoride varnish on your child's teeth.
- Schedule your baby's first dental checkup by age 1.
- Limit sugary foods and drinks.
- Brush your child's teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Ensure your child is drinking tap water that contains fluoride.
- Ask your child's dentist about applying dental sealants when appropriate.

Beyond physical pain that can cause problems with eating, learning and playing, [studies](#) have found that cavities can lead to feelings of embarrassment, worry, sadness and anxiety, which can impact a child's emotional well-being and social development.

"These findings reinforce that a healthy mouth is a key part of overall health at any age, and early childhood cavities can lead to physical, emotional and social distress in children. Not to mention, treating tooth decay can be expensive," said Dufurrena.

For more oral health tips for children, visit the Oral Health Resources section at [UnitedConcordia.com](https://www.unitedconcordia.com).

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