February is Children's Dental Health Month: Gum Disease Affects Kids Too



CAMP HILL, Pa. (Feb. 9, 2023) – Gum disease doesn't only affect adults – children can develop it too. During Children's Dental Health Month, United Concordia Dental reminds parents and guardians to encourage good oral hygiene habits in kids to help keep their gums healthy.

Gum disease, also known as periodontal disease, occurs in 50% of children by age four or five and peaks at nearly 100% at puberty, according to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

Children are most susceptible to chronic gingivitis – the mildest form of gum disease – which is treatable and preventable with good dental hygiene habits. If left untreated, gingivitis can lead to more serious and damaging forms of gum disease, such as periodontitis and other conditions impacting the teeth and surrounding tissues.

"It's important for parents to understand that children are at risk for gum disease and to know the signs to watch for since kids don't always recognize when something is wrong," said Katie Deffke, DDS, dental director, United Concordia Dental. "Gum disease isn't always painful, so keep an eye out for other warning signs like red and swollen gums, persistent bad breath and bleeding while brushing or flossing."

To help reduce a child's risk of getting gum disease, consider following a consistent oral hygiene routine that includes:

- Proper teeth brushing technique in the morning and evening before bedtime.
- Daily flossing that effectively cleans the surfaces of the teeth that toothbrushing cannot reach.
- A healthy diet that limits the amount and frequency of sugary and starchy foods.
- Regular dental visits every six months.

United Concordia offers a free mobile app, Chomper Chums®, for children ages 4 to 11 that can make learning brushing techniques, flossing and healthy eating habits into an entertaining game for the whole family. Parents and their kids can download it from the App Store or Google Play.

"Children rely first on their parents and guardians to manage their dental care, so establishing healthy habits from the start will set them up for a lifetime of good oral and overall health," said Deffke.

To learn more about how the health of the mouth is connected to the health of the body, visit the Oral Health Resources section at UnitedConcordia.com.

Contact:
Kristy Cramlet
United Concordia Dental
717-260-7762
kristy.cramlet@ucci.com

Leilyn Perri
Highmark Health
717-302-4243
leilyn.perri@highmarkhealth.org

---

https://news.unitedconcordia.com/united-concordia-news-releases?item=122493