United Concordia - Newsroom

CAMP HILL, Pa. (Feb. 8, 2024) — Children with cleft lips and palates face varied health challenges, making it important for them to have personalized treatment plans and take consistent care of their teeth. This Children's Dental Health Month, United Concordia Dental shares resources to help parents navigate their children's unique dental needs.

As one of the most common birth disorders, cleft lips and palates occur when a baby's lip or roof of the mouth doesn't form properly during pregnancy, leaving an opening in the tissue. This condition often leads to issues with feeding and speaking, as well as ear infections and hearing.

It can also impact the child's size, shape, positioning and number of teeth, making them harder to clean and increasing the risk for cavities, gum disease and tooth decay.

"Treatment plans can vary for children with cleft lips and palates depending on the severity of cleft, the child's age and needs, and if any other medical conditions are present," said Roosevelt Allen, DDS, MAGD, ABGD, chief dental officer, United Concordia Dental. "Having dentists as an integral part of a child's integrated care team, along with regularly brushing with fluoride toothpaste and flossing, will help keep them on a healthy path throughout the duration of their treatment and beyond."

While there are many aspects of care for parents to consider, here are three common dental health areas that can benefit their child's treatment.

- **Pediatric:** A family dentist can check the health of a child's teeth after the first tooth appears. They can also provide tips on proper cleaning, a healthy diet and fluoride treatment, which are important for maintaining good oral health.
- **Orthodontic:** After permanent teeth appear, an orthodontist can look at any positioning issues. Cleft lip and palate patients may need their teeth straightened or jaw aligned.
- **Prosthodontic:** A prosthodontist focuses on treating complex dental and facial issues. There are various ways they can help replace missing teeth, such as building a dental bridge. They can also help close the space between the nose and mouth, which can aid with speech.

For more on oral health, visit the Oral Health Resources section atUnitedConcordia.com.

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