

# Oral Health Care Information

## For Patients with Special Needs

### Dental Development

- Atypical patterns of eruption and shedding including delayed development and missing teeth occurs more often in children with special health care needs. Irregular tooth development can also occur causing the tooth to have an abnormal shape or texture.
- Dr. Moses will address any concerning issues should they arise.

### High Risk Patients

- Due to medications, diet, and limitations in daily self-maintenance, patients with special needs are often at a higher risk for tooth decay, gum disease, and oral trauma.
- An increased risk factor does not mean that oral problems are inevitable. Careful monitoring, preventative measures such as sealants and fluoride, and proper home care can help your child keep a healthy smile.

### Additional Preventative Measures

#### *Brushing*

- If the patient is unable to brush thoroughly, a parent or caregiver should assist them.
- Some children prefer items that buzz or vibrate, so an electric toothbrush may improve compliance. Electric toothbrushes are also beneficial because the rapid brush strokes clean better than a manual toothbrush and require less work by the brusher. Dr. Moses recommends the *Sonicare* toothbrushes. These brushes can be more costly than other electric toothbrushes but are easy to use and clean more thoroughly than other electric brushes. Information and brushes are available at our office.
- If you or a caretaker has difficulty keeping the child's mouth open to brush, a mouth prop may be helpful. These are made of dense foam that the patient can bite on while you brush the opposite side. Please ask us for a sample if you would like to try one. Future orders can be made at [www.specializedcare.com](http://www.specializedcare.com).

#### *Flossing*

- Flossing between a child's molars can be difficult, especially if the child is non-compliant. Floss holders may allow you to reach these hard-to-reach areas more easily.
- There is a wide variety of floss aids available. Please remember that with any floss aid you choose, you are still responsible for effective flossing. These aids are not meant to floss for you, but to make flossing a more pleasurable experience.
- Floss holders with the handle perpendicular to the floss allow you to reach the back of the mouth more easily. The product called *flossAwl* allows you to use your choice of floss. This aid acts as an extended finger (replacing one of yours) so it allows you to cup the floss around the tooth and to use a new section of floss easily. If your child enjoys vibrating sensations, you may want to try the Oral-B *Hummingbird* flosser. It uses disposable floss holders that are placed into the vibrating handle.

#### *Diet*

- Brushing after meals and snacks is not always feasible, but monitoring your child's diet can help in preventing dental disease.
- Limiting the number of times a day your child snacks can be beneficial because plaque acids are activated each time sugar is in the mouth.
- Because your child is not likely to remove remaining food from his/her teeth, removing it by brushing or wiping with a gauze or cloth is also very helpful.

### *Fluoride*

- Fluoride varnish is often used when the start of a cavity is detected soon enough. Dr. Moses will see any suspicious areas during the child's exam and will determine if this treatment is a possibility. This high dose of fluoride can re-mineralize the tooth and save your child from unnecessary dental work.

### *Sealants*

- Sealants can be especially helpful in preventing cavities in patients who have difficulty brushing.

## Behavior Management

- Care for patients with special needs is often beyond what is considered routine. It requires specialized knowledge, increased awareness and attention, and accommodation.
- When treating patients with special needs, as assessment of the patient's medical and mental status as well as his/her degree of functioning is critical in establishing good communication. Information provided by a parent or caregiver prior to the appointment helps our staff in preparation. The better we know your child, the better we will be able to meet your expectations.
- Some children need more than a gentle, caring manner to feel comfortable during dental treatment. Mild sedation may be beneficial for such children.
- Demanding and resistant behaviors can interfere with the safe delivery of dental treatment. When traditional behavior management techniques are not adequate, protective stabilization can be helpful. Most patients can be managed in the office with the parent/caregiver's assistance. When the safety of the patient or staff is in question, care will be provided at a local hospital.

## Scheduling

### *In Office Treatment*

- Dr. Moses has reserved certain Friday mornings where only our special needs patients are seen. These appointments are given more time and Dr. Moses sees fewer patients to ensure that he can accommodate each patient's unique circumstances.

### *Treatment under General Anesthesia*

- In the event that both you and Dr. Moses choose for dental treatment to be provided in a hospital setting under general anesthesia, a designated member of our business office staff will work with you and the hospital to schedule the date.