
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2024

February is National Children's Dental Health Month
Encouraging residents to schedule dental appointments

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) and the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance are joining the nation in observing National Children's Dental Health Month in February. This health observance brings together thousands of professionals, healthcare providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers, teachers, and many others. The American Dental Association (ADA) 2024 campaign is "Healthy Habits for Healthy Smiles."

"According to the American Association of Pediatrics, dental cavities are the most common chronic childhood disease and the No. 1 reason for missed school in the United States," said Dr. Mark Madion, DDS, at Dental Clinics North in Traverse City. "Lack of parental education, inadequate access to quality dental care, and poor oral hygiene are the primary contributors to this problem. Routine examinations and early detection of cavities are key to preventing more serious issues in the future. At Dental Clinics North, we work with our patients to establish those healthy habits early, so they can last a lifetime."

Key points for National Children's Dental Health Month, supported by the ADA:

- **Brush and Floss Every Day:** Families need to make daily toothbrushing and flossing a habit. These simple routines help prevent cavities, gum disease, and other oral health issues from infancy through adulthood.
- **Healthy Eating for Healthy Teeth:** A balanced diet is crucial for strong teeth and gums. Encourage children to choose healthy snacks like fruits, vegetables, and dairy products over sugary treats. Sugars and starches encourage the production of plaque, which can attack tooth enamel.
- **Regular Dental Check-ups:** Schedule regular dental check-ups for your child to catch issues early on. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that children find a regular dental provider, or dental home, by age one. Finding and fixing problems early can prevent more significant dental issues later.
- **Infant Support:** Place only formula or breast milk in bottles, not sugary drinks. Ensure the bottle is removed before putting the infant down for sleep. Encourage children to drink from a cup by their first birthday. Discourage prolonged use of sippy cups. Provide clean pacifiers – don't put them in your mouth or dip them in something sweet before giving them to your child.

GTCHD partners with [Dental Clinics North](#) to provide children and adults with oral care for residents who qualify. Services include oral exams, cleaning, fluoride treatment, fillings, education, and other dental procedures. Dental Clinics North is located inside the GTCHD at 2600 LaFranier Road in Suite B in Traverse City. If you would like to schedule your appointment, please call 1-877-321-7070.

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