

# Daniel L. Kaler D.D.S. Orthodontist

Creating beautiful, healthy smiles for kids, teens and adults.

Complimentary Consultation

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# NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

## Make the dentist a fun experience for kids

Visits to the dentist for periodic cleanings and checkups are an important component of oral hygiene. Dentists also may be the first people to identify potential issues that can affect health elsewhere in the body. Many people are unaware that children should visit the dentist early in their lives. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that a child should visit the dentist by age one or within six months of the eruption of his or her first tooth. However, many parents wait until much later — age two or three — to take kids to the dentist, offers Delta Dental Plans. Hesitance to visit the dentist may stem from personal fears or perceived reactions by children. Primary teeth may eventually fall out, but they shouldn't be ignored. They save space for permanent teeth and serve other functions. Therefore, parents should begin to acclimate children to the dentist at a young age to make the experience fun and even enjoyable.

**Lead by example**  
Children who witness their parents putting off going to the dentist or being apprehensive about visiting the dentist may develop their own fears. Always paint the dentist in a positive light and keep appointments.

**Focus on the good aspects**  
Talk up all the benefits of going to the dentist, such as having a squeaky clean and fresh mouth. Many hygienists will hand out small toys after a successful visit, or at the least a great new toothbrush and other fun products to try.

**Get a tour of the office**  
Ask the staff if your child can get a special tour of the office with explanations of all the tools and equipment. Understanding what to expect the next time around in a no-pressure situation can make the process much easier for everyone involved. The dentist may be able to also give a test ride on the exam chair, moving it up and down, as well as showing off the water fountain and oral irrigator.

**Avoid giving false hope**  
Do not tell a child that "everything will be OK" at the dentist's office. If a child needs treatment that may be uncomfortable, he or she may not trust you the next time a dental visit is scheduled, according to Joel H. Berg, D.D.S., M.S., Director of the Department of Dentistry at Seattle Children's Hospital. Avoid words like "shots," "pain," "hurt," or even "cavities." Dentists, particularly pediatric dentists, may have their own vocabulary that can assuage fears and seem less alarming to kids. Over time, dental visits can become an easy routine with children, setting them up for a lifetime of healthy mouths and teeth.

## Dental hygiene is about more than just your teeth

Individuals tend to learn about dental hygiene at an early age. On the recommendation of their children's pediatricians, parents may begin brushing their youngsters' teeth the moment the first tooth breaks through the gums. While proper dental hygiene is vital to oral health, it also can have a profound effect on the rest of the body. According to the Mayo Clinic, poor oral health might contribute to various diseases and conditions. Periodontitis is a severe yet preventable gum infection that can lead to tooth loss if left untreated. But the threat of periodontitis doesn't end in the mouth. The American Academy of Periodontology notes there's a connection between periodontitis and several other diseases. While bacteria was long suspected to be the link between periodontitis and other diseases in the body, the AAP notes that recent research points to inflammation as the culprit that connects periodontitis with diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

**Diabetes**  
The AAP notes that people with diabetes are at increased risk for periodontal disease, speculating that diabetes patients' risk is higher because people with diabetes are more vulnerable to infections than those without diabetes. While that suggests periodontal disease is a byproduct of diabetes, the AAP notes that research points to the relationship being a two-way street. Periodontal disease may make it more difficult for people with diabetes to control their blood sugar, making dental hygiene an especially vital component of routine healthcare for people with diabetes.

**Heart disease**  
The AAP notes that research indicates periodontal disease increases a person's risk for heart disease, with the inflammation caused by the former leading to the latter. People with existing heart conditions also may find that periodontal disease exacerbates those conditions. The Mayo Clinic notes that the link between heart disease and periodontal disease is not fully understood, but enough studies have been conducted for scientists to support the notion that the two are connected.

**Can periodontal disease be prevented?**  
Periodontal disease is preventable. A daily dental hygiene regimen that includes brushing after meals, flossing at least once per day and swishing with mouthwash are some simple, healthy habits that can prevent periodontal disease. In addition, the AAP recommends that people at increased risk for periodontal disease, including the elderly and smokers, should discuss their risk with their dental professionals. Dental hygiene can do more for individuals than produce a mouthful of pearly white teeth. In fact, people who prioritize dental hygiene may lower their risks for various diseases.

### Healthy Start for Kids

9 out of 10 kids exhibit sleep disordered breathing symptoms, we offer Healthy Start to develop a child's airway to help them get the oxygen and the sleep they need to be healthy. Start as early as 2 years old. Addresses: Snoring, bedwetting, grinding teeth, difficulty in school, mouth breathing, crooked teeth, thumb sucking, over bite & under bite.

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Our staff provides children of all ages with a positive dental experience, and look forward to working with parents to ensure the health of their children.

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### Kids Love Clean, Healthy Teeth

Proper dental care for children is the best way to establish a healthy mouth for the rest of their lives. By routinely visiting the dentist, your child will be monitored for many potential issues including orthodontic alignment concerns, disordered breathing and airway development, oral cancer screening and dental decay. Our team is trained to spot potential issues early in a child's life so we can help set them up for a lifetime of healthy smiles.

We Welcome New Patients

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### February is National Children's Dental Health Month!

Healthy Smile Tips:

- Brush your teeth 3 times per day
- Use mouthwash after brushing
- Visit your dentist and hygienist twice per year (starting at age 1)
- Floss at least once per day
- Change your toothbrush every three months

"Where Your Family Comes First!"

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