

Dr. Kelsey's Tooth Treats



Mouth Protectors

When a child begins to participate in recreational activities and organized sports, injuries can occur. Mouth protectors, also called mouth guards, are an important piece of protective face gear and hold top priority as sports equipment. They protect not just teeth, but the lips, cheeks, and tongue. They help protect children from head and neck injuries as concussions and jaw fractures. Research shows most oral injuries occur when athletes are not wearing mouth protection. A child should wear protection whenever he or she is in an activity with a risk of falls or of head contact with other players or equipment. This includes football, baseball, basketball, soccer, hockey, skateboarding, even gymnastics. We usually think of football and hockey as the most dangerous to the teeth, but nearly half of sports-related mouth injuries occur in basketball and baseball. Choose a mouth guard that your child can wear comfortably. If it feels bulky or interferes with speech, it will be left in the locker room. Dr. Kelsey can advise you on what type of mouth guard is best for your child.

Diet Tips for Teens

Hidden calories and empty calories are causing teens to become increasingly heavy and nutrient deficient at the same time. As kids enter their teenage years, their nutrient requirements suddenly increase to adult levels, and for minerals like phosphorous, magnesium and calcium they actually need more than adults do. A full 45 percent of total bone growth occurs during adolescence, and most teens don't consume enough calcium to support it. Only 13 percent of girls and 36 percent of boys consume the recommended amount of calcium. But for teens on the run, it's hard to count calories, which are not always revealed on signs and packaging in most fast-food restaurants. Instead, signs and food ads promote super-size meals and don't reveal that, for instance, one Big Mac has 590 calories/34 grams of fat (more than half the recommended daily maximum for fat of 65 grams), Chicken McNuggets has 500 calories/26 fat grams and a King-size Burger King fries packs 600 calories and $\frac{3}{4}$ the daily fat max.

In addition to hidden calories, there are empty-calorie foods, high in calories but low in nutrients. Soda is a great example; a 16-ounce bottle of Coke has 200 calories and provides only approximately 1 percent each of the calcium, iron, and zinc that an average teen needs each day. On the other hand, a 16-ounce glass of freshly squeezed orange juice has 223 calories and provides approximately 4 percent of the fiber, 14 percent of the Vitamin A, 38 percent of the folate, 331 percent of Vitamin C, 15 percent of B6 and 17 percent of the required magnesium.

Mouth Ulcers

Younger children often get mouth ulcers as part of a viral infection, like herpes gingivostomatitis or hand foot and mouth disease. In older children, recurrent ulcers are often caused by canker sores or aphthous stomatitis.

Your child's age, duration of symptoms (how long the ulcer has been there), and other symptoms can help Dr. Kelsey figure out what is causing your child's mouth ulcers. If a specific trigger for your child's ulcers are found, those things should be avoided. A symptom diary, record when your child got his ulcer and the things he ate and used in his mouth (toothpaste, mouthwash, etc.) just before and any medication she may have taken, may help you find triggers. When no triggers are found, a mouth rinse or toothpaste with tricolsan may be helpful. Colgate Total toothpaste contains tricolsan. Sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), which is an additive in many brands of toothpaste and rinses, is thought to be a possible trigger of ulcers in some people with recurrent aphthous stomatitis, so it may be helpful to use SLS free toothpaste. SLS free toothpaste include: Biotene, Tom's of Maine, and Rembrandt's Canker Sore toothpaste. Also, it may be helpful to avoid letting your mouth get dry, avoid sharp foods, like chips, and use a soft toothbrush.