



## MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your public health team, connecting with our communities to achieve healthier outcomes

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### **Kids: Choose water for a sparkling smile!**

Stanton, MI- The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD), My Community Dental Centers (MCDC) and local dentists remind parents to give their children a smile that lasts a lifetime.

February is National Children's Dental Health Month, which brings an increased focus on the importance of regular dental checkups and a balanced diet. The theme of this year's campaign, "Choose Water for a Sparkling Smile," urges children to choose water, whenever possible, and avoid drinks with added sugar, like soda and sweetened juices.

Get your child off to a good start with a visit to the dentist after their first tooth erupts or before their first birthday. This creates a positive experience and establishes a dental home before problems arise. Help them stay on track by encouraging them to eat a balanced diet, including healthy snacks, and see to it that they brush and floss daily and receive regular checkups. These actions promote healthy teeth and gums and will help ensure your child has a sparkling smile that lasts a lifetime.

Additional tips from the American Dental Association include:

- Place only formula, milk or breast milk in bottles and avoid filling them with sugar water, juice or soft drinks.
- Infants should finish their bedtime and naptime bottles before going to bed.
- If your child uses a pacifier, provide one that is clean—don't dip it in sugar or honey, or put it in your mouth before giving it to your child.
- Encourage children to drink from a cup by their first birthday and discourage frequent or prolonged use.

Older children should follow the same rules of regular brushing, flossing, dental visits, eating a balanced diet, and choosing water instead of sugary beverages like juice and soft drinks. Keep in mind that sugars and starches encourage the production of plaque, which can attack tooth enamel. Also, it's not just the sugar in soft drinks that decays teeth; it's the acid too, making it double trouble.

The Montcalm Community Dental Center in Sidney and My Community Dental Center in St. Johns are operated by My Community Dental Centers on behalf of Mid-Michigan District Health Department. Both dental centers serve those enrolled in Medicaid, including Healthy Kids and MiChild, the Healthy Michigan Plan, low-income uninsured and those with private insurance. These centers are accepting new patients. For more information or to schedule an appointment please call 1-877-313-6232.

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

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