



## MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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

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### **Help your kids fight ‘Sugar Wars’**

February is Children’s Dental Health Month

Stanton- Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD), in conjunction with My Community Dental Centers and local dentists, reminds you to give your child a smile that lasts a lifetime.

February is National Children’s Dental Health Month, and this year’s theme, *Sugar Wars*, urges children to defeat the effects of sugar and maintain good oral health by brushing, flossing, rinsing, and eating healthy snacks.

Good health habits should begin with an introductory visit to the dentist after your child’s first tooth erupts or before their first birthday. This early visit creates a positive experience and establishes a dental home before problems arise. A balanced diet, limited snacks, daily brushing and flossing and regular check-ups are the keys to healthy teeth and gums. Here are some additional tips from the American Dental Association to keep your young child's mouth healthy and happy:

- Place only formula, milk or breast milk in bottles. Avoid filling the bottle 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, don’t dip it in sugar or honey, or put it in your mouth before giving it to the child.
- Encourage children to drink from a cup by their first birthday and discourage frequent or prolonged use of sippy cups.
- Serve nutritious snacks and limit sweets.
- Help your child avoid juice and soft drinks. 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 this double trouble.

If your child needs a dental home, consider the Sidney Dental Center (1550 W. Sidney Road, Sidney), or the St. Johns Dental Center (1307 E. Townsend Road, St. Johns), both operated by My Community Dental Centers, on behalf of MMDHD. These clinics are accepting new patients and are focused on serving persons enrolled in Medicaid and low-income uninsured. 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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