

Pediatricians should be involved in oral health care

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(HealthDay)—Pediatricians should perform oral health assessments and help maintain and restore oral health for the youngest children, according to a policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published online Nov. 24 in *Pediatrics*.

Dental caries is the most common chronic disease of childhood, and its prevalence has not decreased over the last decade for the youngest of children. With this in mind, David M. Krol, M.D., M.P.H., from the AAP's Section on Oral Health Executive Committee, and colleagues developed a [policy statement](#) on oral health.

The authors note that pediatricians often confront morbidity associated with dental caries. As pediatricians see the youngest children more often than dentists, they should be knowledgeable about dental caries

progression, prevention of dental caries, and interventions for maintaining and restoring health. Suggestions for pediatricians include periodically administering an oral health risk assessment for all children; including anticipatory guidance for oral health as part of comprehensive patient counseling; advising parents and caregivers to reduce the frequency of exposure to sugar in foods and drinks; encouraging tooth brushing as soon as teeth erupt; advising parents and caregivers to monitor tooth brushing until age 8; and building and maintaining collaborative relationships with local dentists.

"Because [dental caries](#) is such a common and consequential disease process in the pediatric population, it is essential that pediatricians include [oral health](#) in their daily practice of pediatrics," the authors write.

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