



### Three Reasons to Take Kids to the Dentist

Kids should visit the dentist early and often. When kids visit the dentist from a young age they get the chance to learn about taking care of their smiles in kid-friendly terms.

In this video, kids will learn three reasons why they should visit the dentist:

1. The dentist will use kid-friendly terms to explain why it's important to take care of their mouth, teeth, and gums.
2. The dentist will help kids feel positive and confident about going to the dentist. This will help them keep making good choices as they get older.
3. The dentist will help build trust with young patients. This helps reduce any fear or anxiety associated with going to the dentist.

To help kids understand more about what a dentist does, here is a helpful breakdown of the differences between a family dentist and a pediatric dentist (that's the kind of dentist that works with kids).

#### **What is a Pediatric Dentist?**

All dentists complete a bachelor's degree and attend four years of dental school. An additional two years of training treating infants, children, teens and children with special needs is required to become a pediatric dentist.

Pediatric dentists (also called pedodontists) specialize in caring for children's teeth and gums throughout the many different stages of childhood. This care includes:

- Exams
- Preventive care (cleanings and fluoride treatments)
- Treatment for cavities and gum disease
- Care for dental injuries (like a knocked-out tooth)
- Recommendations on diet and nutrition
- Advice for creating healthy habits (brushing tips or what to do about thumb sucking)
- Alerting parents to signs of dental issues that may be related to other conditions (such as diabetes, asthma, etc.)

Pediatric dentists spend extra time with young mouths and know how to keep children relaxed. They know that small children are not always patient, and they know how to examine and talk with kids in a safe and comforting way.

Pediatric dentist offices are created for children and often include:

- Fun office themes like dinosaurs, trains, or rock and roll
- Kid-friendly staff that enjoy working with younger patients
- Smaller dental tools for tiny mouths
- A comforting environment to treat special needs children with different care requirements

For more dental health educational resources, go to [www.healthysmilelearning.org](http://www.healthysmilelearning.org). Healthy Smile Learning is an outreach effort of Arizona PBS on behalf of the Delta Dental Institute.

## **What is a Family Dentist?**

A family dentist or general dentist completes dental school but does not specialize in a certain type of dentistry. A general dentist provides a wide range of services to people of all ages, including kids. These services can include:

- Preventive care (exams, cleanings and X-rays)
- Restorative care such as fillings, crowns or denture fittings
- Teeth whitening
- Talking with patients about health concerns (like diabetes, sleep apnea and good nutrition)