

# TOOTHFULLY. *speaking*



Dr. Preeti Desai

## SUMMER VACATION IS HERE ...

*Not from oral  
health though!*

Summer break is a time of relaxation and fun for kids: sleeping in, taking family trips to the beach or going to summer camps. But it's equally important for kids to maintain good oral health habits.

School year is by definition regimented in its structure with routines in place. Before bed each night, kids brush and floss and repeat brushing in the morning before school. It's easy to fall off the wagon during summer holidays. But falling off the wagon means bad breath, gum disease and cavities don't take a vacation.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

#### **A) STICK TO A ROUTINE, NOT A SCHEDULE.**

The nine months that make up the school year usually come with a pretty rigid schedule for the kids. While a summer schedule isn't necessary, keeping kids in some type of general routine is helpful. This includes reminding them that even if they are staying home all day, staying up late or sleeping in, they still need to follow through on their daily oral-health routine.

**B) STAYING HYDRATED.** Summer months bring warm temperatures and more outdoor activities. Keeping hydrated is important to staying healthy and maintaining every system and region of the body. This includes the mouth. Drinking water can help prevent dry mouth and the negative effects that come with it such as bad breath, tooth and gum disease, mouth sores, gingivitis etc. Dry mouth can even cause taste buds to shut down, making foods taste less appetizing.

**C) WHAT ARE YOUR KIDS DRINKING.** It might be tempting to give kids sports drinks because of their claim to replenish bodily fluids. However, these have negative effects on oral health because of high levels of acids and sugar. They are loaded with sodium, which can have a counter-effect to relieving thirst. The best bet is to drink plenty of water before, during and after participating activities.

**D) SNACKING** may also take over regular meals and this too can expose the child to more frequent onslaught of sugar loads on a chronic basis and as such the tooth surface is again prone to more decay and breakdown. Make sure meals are eaten as opposed to frequent snacking.

Obviously kids want to have fun during the summer and they should be able to. But they may need a little nudging from their parents to make sure they don't get so caught up in fun that they let their brushing, flossing and rinsing routines fall by the wayside.

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