



# SMART MOUTHS

Here's a statistic to sink your teeth into: "The most common chronic disease in kids today is tooth decay," says Edward H. Moody Jr., DDS, president of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Nearly half of all children have had a cavity and another one in eight adolescents have one that's currently untreated, according to national reports. Steal these strategies to keep your child smiling pretty.

## TACTIC #1

Swish away sugar.



"It takes about 20 minutes for our saliva to dilute sugar," explains Moody. "But when we slowly sip on soda or eat a lollipop, the sugar remains in our mouths for longer amounts of time."

Encourage your child to drink water after eating sweets, which helps rinse away cavity creators.

## TACTIC #2

Don't share eating utensils.



Blame genetics, but some people's mouths simply harbor more cavity-causing bacteria than others, Moody says. Resist the urge to drink from the same water bottle as your kid or give her a taste of something with your fork, especially if you're prone to tooth decay yourself.

## TACTIC #3

Recruit help.



If your teen seems lax about brushing, rev things up with an electric toothbrush. It might dislodge plaque better and encourage her to brush longer. Fluoride mouthwash also helps reduce decay-causing bacteria. Lastly, let her chew sugar-free gum to boost saliva production.

# 1 IN 3

That's about the number of kids who will contract a **wart** next year. And they're more likely to catch it from a family member or classmate than from a public area, like a pool. Warts usually go away, but you can manage the growths with over-the-counter salicylic acid products (like Dr. Scholl's Clear Away Wart Remover One Step Clear Strips) and prevent transmission by having your child keep the infected area covered.

Source: Leiden University Medical Center, Netherlands

## Q&A / IF MY CHILD DOESN'T SWIM, CAN HE STILL GET SWIMMER'S EAR?

*Yes. Your child doesn't have to spend his summers in the pool to suffer from this infection, which causes pain, swelling and redness. "Anyone who breaks the skin of his ear canal—perhaps by scratching it with a finger or a cotton swab—is at risk," says Charles Elmaraghy, MD, a pediatric otolaryngologist at Nationwide Children's Hospital. "But the condition is more common in swimmers, since the inflammation-causing bacteria flourish in a humid, moist environment." Your pediatrician may prescribe antibiotic ear drops to treat the infection, which often subsides within a week.*

