



Tuolumne County Public Health Department

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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February is National Children's Dental Health Month

SONORA, CA— Tuolumne County residents are invited to join others across the country to celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month. Join the Tuolumne County Public Health Department's Local Oral Health Program and the Smile Keepers School Based Dental Program of Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office as we bring awareness to the importance of childhood oral health.

Dental disease is the [most common chronic disease](#) for children in the United States. Children with poor oral health may develop an infection or other serious health condition. [Many children suffering from oral disease have lower school attendance](#), receive lower grades, and have lower self-esteem than children who don't have oral health problems. Children can also have trouble eating, speaking, or sleeping due to pain. However, with proper care and treatment, childhood dental problems can largely be prevented. Follow these tips for healthy teeth and gums.

Follow these "healthy habits for healthy smiles":

1. As soon as your child's first tooth appears, help them brush in the morning and at bedtime. Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste for two minutes each time.
2. Just a dab will do! Children ages 0-3 should use a grain of rice-sized amount of toothpaste. Children 3 years and above should use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
3. Floss daily. Help your child floss between their teeth as soon as they have two teeth that touch.
4. See the dentist twice a year. Children should see a dentist and dental hygienist for a professional cleaning and checkup every six months.
5. Ask your child's dentist or pediatrician about a fluoride prescription. [Fluoride is a natural mineral found in water that helps prevent cavities by making the entire tooth surface more resistant to decay.](#) You can get a fluoride prescription for your child after 6 months of age.
6. Ask your child's dentist about molar sealants. Molar sealants are clear, protective coatings put on permanent molars to help keep them protected from cavities. Schedule an appointment for your child to get molar sealants as soon as their permanent back teeth have grown in. This can happen as early as 5 years old!
7. Choose healthy foods and drinks. A balanced diet is an important part of keeping your teeth and gums healthy. Help your child make healthier food choices and be

sure to limit sugary snacks like juice, candy, and carbohydrates such as crackers, chips, and sticky foods.

8. Drink more water. Water helps keep your body hydrated and your mouth healthy. Try adding fruit to water for more flavor!
9. Don't use tobacco. [Using any type of tobacco can stain teeth, give you bad breath, and cause gum disease or cancer.](#)
10. To learn more about oral health go to [SmileCalifornia.org](#) or [ada.org](#).

Join Smile Keepers and the Local Oral Health Program during Storytime at the Library! Help us celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month with stories, crafts, and oral health giveaways. Storytime starts at 10:30am, see dates and locations below.

- **Sonora Branch Library** (480 Greenley Rd): February 1, 7, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29
- **Groveland Branch Library** (18990 CA-120): February 2
- **Tuolumne City Branch Library** (18636 Main St): February 9
- **Twain Harte Branch Library** (18701 Tiffeni Dr): February 16

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