The Brush Strategy
Getting Children and Teens to Regularly Brush Their Teeth

Do you struggle to get your kids to brush their teeth on their own? Many kids don’t want to brush and floss their teeth, much like they don’t want to take baths or clean their rooms. Nevertheless, these are necessary skills they have to learn. Just as diabetes is a disease that requires a lifelong commitment, proper dental care is important for overall good health.

According to the American Dental Association (ADA), tooth decay is a major risk factor for children with diabetes. Good blood sugar control is key to controlling and preventing oral health problems. Higher blood glucose levels can contribute to bacteria growth in the mouth, plaque buildup, and gum disease, while also weakening the body’s ability to fight back. Plaque is a sticky film of bacteria that forms in the mouth. The bacteria feed on starches and sugars, and their acidic by-products damage teeth and cause cavities. The higher the blood sugar level, the greater the supply of sugars.

Parents play a major role in effective diabetes management by helping their children control blood sugar levels, which is key to optimal oral health. As you know, beginning at an early age, children must brush and floss to prevent oral health problems.

5 Tips for Encouraging Your Child

Get a Fun Toothbrush
Get your child a cool toothbrush. Let your child come with you to the store to pick it out. You may be able to do the same with toothpaste too, depending on what your child likes. Make sure their toothpaste is an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste.

Several electric toothbrushes do a good job of helping to remove plaque, and may have timers for each area of the mouth. Note that some children, especially very young children, may not like the vibrations of electric toothbrushes.

Be sure to replace any toothbrush every three to four months before the bristles become frayed.
Make It a Game
Remember the line from Mary Poppins? “In every job that must be done there is an element of fun. Find the fun and *snap*, the job’s a game!” A simple “I bet I can brush my teeth better than you” might get your child excited to brush. Setting their own timer or playing a song that is at least two minutes can add to the fun.

Set Up a Rewards System
We’re not suggesting that you pay your child to brush their teeth. However, you might set up some sort of rewards system that directly connects to dental care. Maybe 30 days of consistent brushing will lead to some sort of big prize.

Turn Tooth Brushing into an Epic Story
Make up a fun story! “Have you heard? The evil plaque monsters are invading Smile Kingdom, and the only way to get rid of them is to use the powerful Brushomatic 9000!” Sounds like fun, right? All it takes is a little story like that to get your kids to see dental care as an action adventure film brought to life.

Brush Your Teeth at the Same Time
Lead by example. Show your child that brushing and flossing is important for everyone. Help your child learn how to brush and clean between teeth with floss at an early age. Your example and interest will often help them to develop great oral care habits.
Rememeber, preventive care, such as a cleaning, is covered at little to no cost to you if you have PacificSource dental insurance.

Summer Camp!
Most kids love summer camp, and kids with diabetes are no exception. Have you thought about diabetes summer camp for your child? Most states have a diabetes summer camp program. Camp offers unique and fun experiences for kids with diabetes. Kids can learn to manage their diabetes with peers and trained professionals in an exciting, adventurous, and safe environment. Kids report that they often feel normal for the first time in their lives. Many camps offer scholarships or reduced rates. If you think your child or teen would like to attend summer camp, check out this website to find a camp near you: Diabetescamps.org/camp-finder

Here are a few camps:

**ADA Camp Montana**
130 Trinity Trail
Fishtail, MT 59028
(800) 676-4065

**FCYD Camp UTADA**
PO Box 482
Huntsville, UT 84317
(801) 566-6913
FcydCampUtada.org

**Camp Hodia**
1701 N. 12th Street
Boise, ID 83702
(208) 891-1023
Hodia.org

**Chris Dudley Basketball Camp**
18062 Keasey Road
Vernonia, OR 97064
(503) 349-0073
ChrisDudley.org

**On Belay Type 1 Diabetes Camp**
30901 SW Forrest Service Road 2066-600
Camp Sherman, OR 97730
(541) 633-9847
CampTamarack.com

**Gales Creek Camp**
59425 NW Cedarbrook Lane
Gales Creek, OR 97117
(503) 968-2267
GalesCreekCamp.org
Get Ready to Get Out!

Time to get outside again. If you’ve had diabetes for a while, you know how important it is to exercise and move. Whether you play sports, dance, walk, or run, it all counts. You can still take part in all of the physical activities you did before your type 1 diabetes diagnosis. But remember, you may have a low blood sugar (glucose) reading after vigorous activity. Make sure you have anything you might need during exercise, as well as anything needed in an emergency. If you need help making a plan, ask your doctor or a member of your diabetes team.

Snacks and hydration: Physical activity and exercise can have different effects on your blood sugar levels. Exercise can lower blood sugar levels because more sugar is leaving the bloodstream to enter the body’s cells. Activity such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, or football practice can drop your blood glucose level quickly. You may need an extra-large snack during physical activity. Foods with protein, like cheese sticks, and complex carbohydrates (carbs) like whole wheat crackers or an apple, may work best. Make sure you drink plenty of water or sports drinks.

Check, and check again: It is important to check your blood glucose level before you begin to exercise, as well as during and after strenuous exercise. Before you start a game or any exercise, know what your blood glucose number is and whether you should snack or just go ahead and play.

Carry Glucagon: What is glucagon? Glucagon is a potentially lifesaving treatment for severe hypoglycemia or insulin reaction. It works by telling the liver to release stored glucose into the bloodstream to quickly bring the blood sugar level back up. Glucagon kits are small and portable. It’s a good idea to carry one with you when you are active. You may have two—one at home and one you take with you whenever you exercise. Avoid emergencies by checking often.

Tell others about your condition: Emergencies can be scary. It’s very important that the people you are with understand how to recognize severe low blood sugar and are able to give an emergency glucagon injection if needed. Anyone you spend time with—family, friends, teammates, coaches, and exercise partners—could need to help you in an emergency. It might be a good idea to wear a medical ID bracelet or necklace indicating diabetes.

Get outside and keep moving, and take care of yourself through good planning.

Three-Cheese Breakfast Puffs
Like little cheese soufflés!

Ingredients
- 4 eggs
- 1/4 cup cottage cheese
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese
- 2 oz. shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Directions
In a medium bowl, lightly beat eggs. Stir in the cheeses. Spray mini muffin tins or silicone cups with oil. Fill each cup a little higher than you would with a cake batter. Place into a preheated 350 degree oven and bake for 15-20 minutes. They will puff up and turn golden on top. Let the puffs cool 5 minutes before removing from cups. They will fall just a bit with cooling.

Makes 16 mini puffs: 42 calories each, less than 1 carb per puff

Adapted from Lisa Marshall, 24/7 Low Carb Diner, 247lowcarbdiner.com.
Thank You, Farmers!

In spring, farmers are busy planting to grow many kinds of fruits and vegetables. Farmers grow the fruits and vegetables you see in grocery stores. Color the picture. Draw or write the names of your favorite fruits and vegetables.

Parents: Find more pictures, puzzles, and games online at kids.niehs.nih.gov.