



# Central Michigan District Health Department

*Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities*



Jennifer Morse, MD, MPH, FAAFP  
Medical Director

Steve Hall, RS, MS  
Health Officer

## **PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA**

**To:** Local Media

**From:** Central Michigan District Health Department

**RE:** February is National Children's Dental Health Month

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### **February Designated as National Children's Dental Health Month**

The American Dental Association, along with the ADA Foundation, and Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) are pleased to announce that February 2023 is National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM). This month-long national health observance brings together thousands of dedicated dental professionals, healthcare providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers, teachers, and many others. February is also an important time to increase the focus on the value of regular dental check-ups and a balanced diet. We also want to remind parents that children can avoid cavities and maintain good oral health by brushing, flossing, rinsing, and choosing healthy snacks.

CMDHD staff would like to let the community know that we can provide oral screenings and varnish applications for children 6 months to 35 months who are enrolled in our WIC programs and/or are eligible for Medicaid insurance coverage. This does not replace dental exams that children should still be receiving from a local dentist. Varnish application helps to support efforts toward a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. Oral screenings and varnish applications are offered by trained Registered Nurses in all the branch offices at CMDHD. Registered Nurses can also provide oral screenings twice a year for those without a dental home to determine the need for a referral to a dentist for evaluation and follow-up care. Varnish applications will be performed up to 4 times per year for those clients who are at a high risk of dental cavities and gum disease who are not currently attending regular dental visits. During these appointments, our staff works with clients to help them find and establish care at a local dentist office. The goal of the Oral Screening and Varnish Application Program is to prevent tooth decay. Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and to help stop cavities that have already started. Fluoride varnish is endorsed by the American Dental Association and is approved by the FDA. In addition to regular dental care and fluoride, here are some tips from the American Dental Association to keep your young child's mouth healthy:

*Please visit us at our website [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org)*

- Place only formula, milk, or breast milk in bottles. Avoid filling the bottle with liquids such as sugar water, juice, or soft drinks.
- Infants should finish their bedtime and naptime bottles before going to bed.
- If your child uses a pacifier, provide one that is clean—don't dip it in sugar or honey or put it in your mouth before giving it to the child.
- Encourage children to drink from a cup by their first birthday and discourage frequent or prolonged use of sippy cups.
- Serve nutritious snacks and limit sweets to mealtimes.
- Brush teeth twice daily and clean between teeth daily.

Older children should follow the same rules of regular brushing, flossing, dental visits, eating a balanced diet, and avoiding sugary beverages like juice and soft drinks. Sugars and starches encourage the production of plaque, which can attack tooth enamel. Remember, it's not just the sugar in soft drinks that decays teeth; it's the acid too, making this double trouble. If your child chews gum, make it sugarless, as chewing sugarless gum after eating can increase saliva flow and help wash out food and decay-producing acid.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org) and follow [Central Michigan District Health Department](#) on Facebook.

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