

SUN TIMES

Preparing Your Child for Their First Dental Visit

Beginning this month, many local children start a new school year. The first day of school can be a daunting experience for children, as can their first visit to a dentist.

They're going to a strange location filled with strange noises and strange people. Then, a bright light shines in their face, and a per-

son wearing a mask and goggles asks them to open their mouth so they can put a pointy instrument inside.

Some children will have no problem, but many are overwhelmed by the experience. Often, the first visit is only a meet and greet, and the child has to return another time for the dentist to exam-

ine their teeth.

To help reduce a child's stress at the dentist, begin at home to prevent the need to fix problems at the dental office. This will reduce the frequency, duration and intensity of time spent in the treatment chair. A simple exam and cleaning is a lot less intimidating than a filling. *(Continued on pg. 2)*



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\$25

First Dental Visit, Continued

It's recommended a child brush twice a day with a toothpaste containing fluoride. Fluoride is a mineral nutrient that strengthens teeth and greatly reduces the risk of cavities. It can also reverse new decay.

A child also needs to floss at least once per day, but will likely need help. Limiting finger/thumb sucking and sugar intake, especially from milk bottles or other sugary drinks, is also helpful to prevent decay.

When a child is nearing their first dental visit, the accompanying adult should explain who the

dentist is and why they need to look at the child's teeth.

Try using positive words and phrases, and emphasize that the purpose of the visit is to keep their teeth and smile strong.

There are several phone apps and children's books that can help explain the dentist. The child can also role play by checking a stuffed animal's teeth or an adult's teeth.

Upon arrival at the office, explain all of the different objects the child may be exposed to, such as the overhead light, metal instruments,

suction tubes, and rotary toothbrush.

It often helps to have very young children sit in an adult's lap on the first visit for an increased sense of security.

After the dentist meets and greets the child, they'll do an exam. This may be followed by cleaning with the rotary toothbrush and fluoride varnish application. Both are pain free procedures.

If a child was well-behaved during their visit, an adult may give them a small prize or reward, but this isn't rec-

ommended for every visit, and steer clear of sugary snacks.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends a child visits a dentist by age 1 or within six months after the first tooth appears. Dr. Sun also recommends the child be old enough to sit still for an exam.

Our office welcomes patients of all ages, and recommends children (and adults) get a cleaning every six months. If your child needs to visit a dentist, call our office at (760) 810-7297 to schedule an appointment.

Fluoride - It Does a Tooth Good

Strengthens Teeth

Helps Prevent Cavities

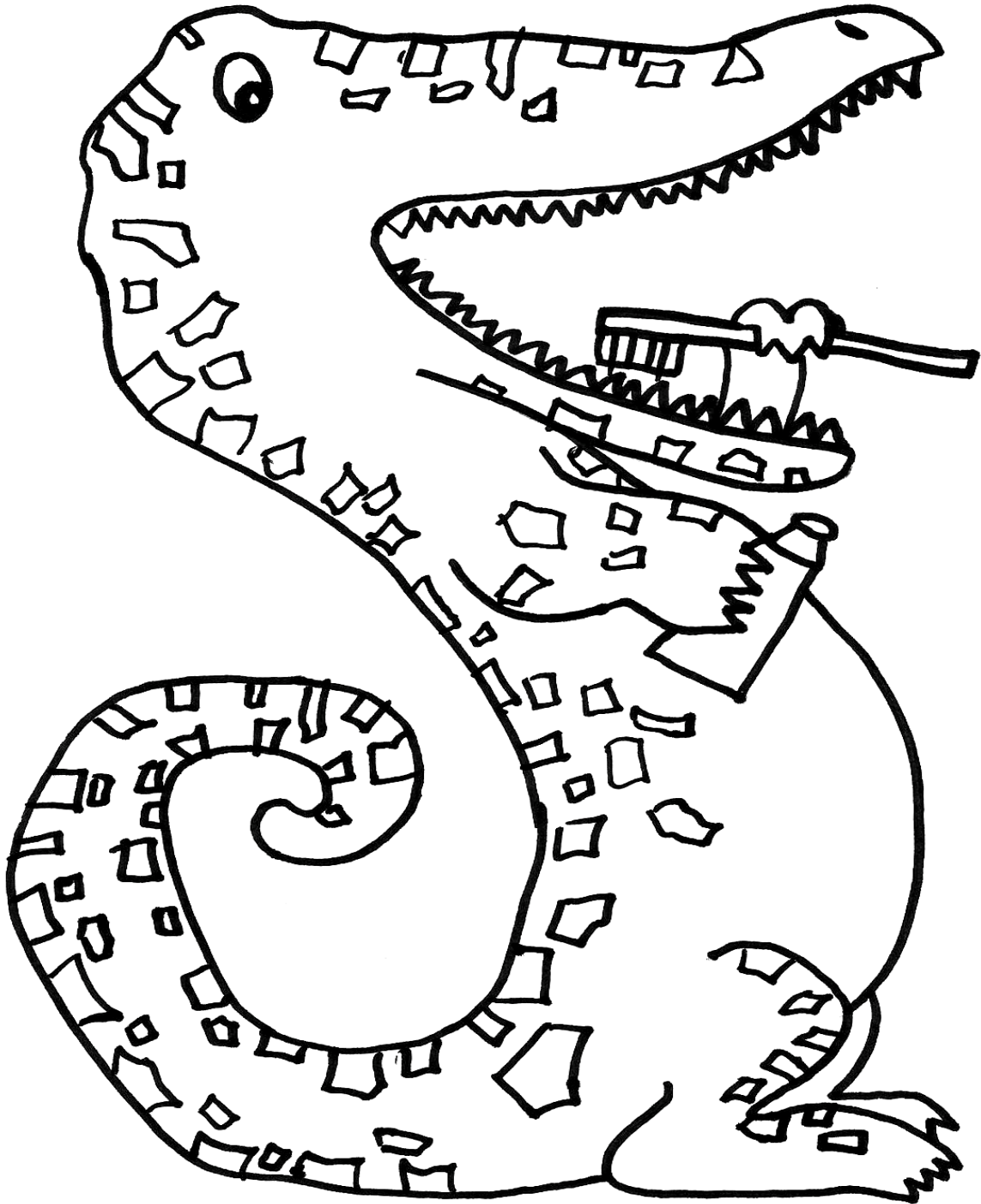
Repairs New Decay

Easy to Apply



Fluoride is a mineral nutrient that strengthens teeth and greatly reduces the risk of cavities. It can also reverse new decay. Many toothpastes and mouthwashes contain fluoride. In addition to these methods, fluoride can be applied directly to your teeth at our office. After a complete cleaning, we brush a clear coat of 5% sodium fluoride varnish onto all teeth. You can then eat and drink immediately, and brush the varnish off after four hours. We recommend this treatment for all children and some adults. Most insurance policies cover the treatment. If your insurance doesn't cover it, it's only \$30 cash.

COLOR YOUR OWN ALLIGATOR



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**Did you know?
A child's first teeth begin
growing six weeks after conception.**