

## Children, Their teeth and Cavities

.The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **noted an increase**, the first in 40 years, in the number of preschoolers with cavities in a study in 2006, and dentists nationwide say they are seeing more preschoolers at all income levels with 6 to 10 cavities or more.

Dentists offer a number of reasons why so many preschoolers suffer from dental decay. Though the reasons are not necessarily new, they are combining to create a worsening problem: endless snacking, juice, soda, and other sweet drinks and giving children sweet drinks at bedtime, parents who choose bottled water rather than fluoridated tap water for their children, and a lack of awareness that infants should, according to pediatric experts, visit a dentist by age 2-3 to be assessed for future cavity risk, even though they may have only a few teeth.

And because some toddlers dislike tooth-brushing, **some parents do not enforce it.**

“Some parents say, ‘I don’t want my little darling to be traumatized.’ The metaphor dentists like to us is, ‘I’d much rather have a kid cry with a soft toothbrush than when I have to drill a cavity.’ ”

“And it’s not just about kids in poverty, though kids of lower socioeconomic status tend to get more cavities,” said Dr. Rochelle Lindemeyer, “It’s not just about kids in poverty, though kids of lower socioeconomic status tend to get more cavities,” said Dr. Rochelle Lindemeyer, “dental Brushing teeth twice a day used to be nonnegotiable”, she said, “but not anymore. Some parents say: ‘He doesn’t want his teeth brushed. We’ll wait until he’s more emotionally mature.’ It’s baffling,” she added.

Good advice to parents includes less frequent snacks, and make those that are given nutritious, offer more water and do away with soda and other sugar sweetened beverages (except for rare treats), and only four ounces of juice a day (there are a lot of calories and sugar in fruit juices!).

And brush those teeth every day starting when they appear!