



February 4, 2020

## Children's Dental Health Month

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) invites you to join us in celebrating National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM), and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Community Water Fluoridation. NCDHM is intended to bring increased awareness of the importance of regular dental check-ups and a healthy oral hygiene routine. Part of a healthy oral hygiene routine may include drinking water with added fluoride. For 75 years, children in the United States have been drinking water with added fluoride and enjoying the benefits of better dental health.

Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 5 children aged five to eleven years have at least one untreated decayed tooth. Children with untreated tooth decay may develop pain and infections that could lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing and learning. The good news is that tooth decay is preventable!

Community water fluoridation has been keeping children's teeth strong, and reducing cavities by about 25% in children and adults. By preventing cavities, community water fluoridation has been shown to save money both for families and for the US health care system. Unfortunately, less than half of the people in Eaton County (41.3%) are reached by community drinking water systems with the appropriate level of fluoride. If children are not served by a community water system that provides them with the adequate amount of fluoride, there are other ways to achieve a healthy smile, such as:

- **Starting an oral hygiene routine early!** Parents should brush their child's teeth when they begin to come in. Children should have their first dental visit by the age of one.
- **Brushing regularly.** Parents should help their child brush twice a day for 2 minutes each time. As soon as the first tooth comes in, brushing should be started.
- **Drinking fluoridated water.** Community water supplies (CWS) may contain enough fluoride to protect your child's teeth. In Eaton County the following communities have community water supplies with enough fluoride to protect oral health; Delta Township, Grand Ledge, Charlotte, Eaton Rapids, and Misty Cove Apartments. Contact your local municipality to determine if your community water supply is fluoridated or visit [nccd.cdc.gov/DOH\\_MWF/Default/Default.aspx](http://nccd.cdc.gov/DOH_MWF/Default/Default.aspx). If you have well water, or live in a community without fluoridated water, consider buying bottled water with fluoride added.
- **Serving nutritious snacks and limiting sweets to mealtimes.** Avoid filling bottles with liquids such as sugar water, juice, or soft drinks.

Routine dental services may be covered if your child is enrolled in a Medicaid plan such as Healthy Kids, Healthy Kids Dental, or MIChild. My Community Dental Centers, on behalf of BEDHD, focuses on providing dental services to Medicaid enrollees and low-income, uninsured residents throughout Eaton County. For more information on MCDC services or to schedule an appointment, please call 1-877-313-6232. For more information regarding Medicaid enrollment visit [barryeatonhealth.org/health-services/health-insurance](http://barryeatonhealth.org/health-services/health-insurance) or contact the Barry-Eaton District Health at 269-945-9516 (Barry County) or 517-543-2430 (Eaton County).