

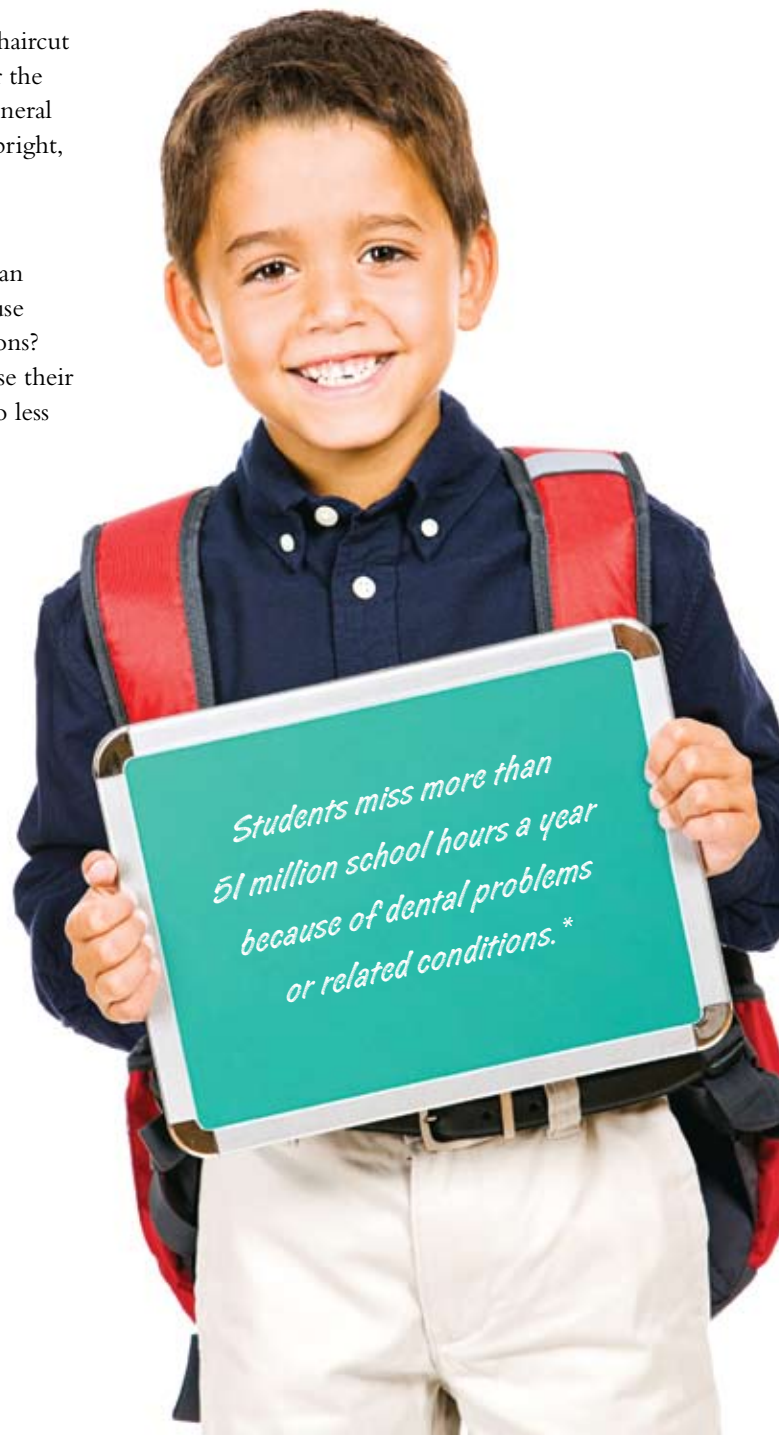
Make the grade with *A+* oral health

New clothes, a new backpack, and a haircut are necessities when getting ready for the new school year. The Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) believes keeping a bright, healthy smile should also be on the back-to-school check list.

Did you know students miss more than 51 million school hours a year* because of dental problems or related conditions? Dental pain can distract students, cause their schoolwork to suffer, and even lead to less time in the classroom.

To start the school year off right and prevent oral-health-related absences, teach your student to floss once a day and brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Beware of frequent snacking, because repeated exposure to sugary or starchy snacks can increase the risk for cavities. And most important, schedule dental visits twice a year for your student. The dentist can provide an oral health assessment and help your student prevent cavities and miss less time from school.

* U.S. Department of Health and Humana Services, "Oral Health in America"



Cough medicine could lead to cavities

It's that time of year when coughs, colds, and flu can make your life miserable. And like most people, you'll probably reach for an over-the-counter medication to ease your symptoms. But did you know that a spoonful of medicine could add tooth decay to your list of symptoms? Many cough drops and liquid medications contain a variety of ingredients that make your teeth more susceptible to decay:

- **High fructose corn syrup, sucrose, and citric acid** can wear down the enamel of your teeth.
- **Alcohol** in some popular cold and cough syrups has a drying effect on the mouth. Saliva helps to naturally rinse the sugars and acids away from your teeth – so with less saliva present, the sugars and acids remain in the mouth even longer, leading to greater risk for decay.

These risks can be magnified if medication is taken before bedtime. The effects of taking liquid medication before bedtime aren't much different than drinking juice or soda before bedtime – because of the decreased saliva, sugar and acids remain in contact with the teeth longer, increasing your risk for decay.

Source: Academy of General Dentistry, "Medications and cough syrups may cause cavities"

Helpful hints:

You can lessen the effects of the sugars and acids in liquid medication:

- Take liquid medication at mealtimes instead of bedtime so that more saliva is produced to rinse away the sugars and acids
- Brush your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste after taking medication
- If you can't brush, rinse your mouth well with water or chew sugar-free gum after taking liquid medication
- Use a topical fluoride after using liquid medication
- If it's available, choose a pill form of the medication instead of syrup



Protect your teeth from sports injuries

As the fall sports season gets under way, you'll want to add another piece of gear to your athletic bag: a mouth guard. Children as well as adults who are involved in sports should consider wearing a mouth guard. Mouth guards are especially important for children because their teeth are still developing.

The types of dental injuries that can occur without the use of a mouth guard are chipped or broken teeth, fractured crowns or bridgework, lip and cheek injuries, root damage to the teeth, fractured jaws, and concussions. Without protection, your teeth are 60 times more susceptible to damage.*

Mouth guards are an inexpensive, simple measure that can help prevent dental trauma, and should be worn during any activity that involves or could involve physical contact. Each year, more than 5 million teeth are knocked out, resulting in nearly \$500 million spent on replacing these teeth.*

Play it safe. Check with your dentist to see what type of mouth guard will work best for you.

According to the American Dental Association, more than 200,000 oral injuries are prevented annually in this country by sports mouth guards.



* American Dental Association