

Is your child sporting a...

Sugar Coated Smile?



by Benjamin Margalit/Margalit Studio

Dr. Amanda Donnelly, DMD is a general dentist who also provides family and cosmetic dental services.

Reducing the amount of sugar consumed is just one of the challenges faced by parents who want to keep their children's smiles healthy and bright—all the way into adulthood. Find out how **Dr. Amanda Donnelly, D.M.D** provides her pediatric patients with an extra layer of protection against tooth decay.

by **Bill Yurgen**

When it comes to their child's oral health, many parents simply go by what they were taught when they were young: brush twice daily, eat a balanced diet and see a dentist regularly," **Dr. Amanda Donnelly, D.M.D** explains. "That's sound advice, but today there are additional risks that have been identified, and we try to educate both the child and the parent about them."

Dr. Amanda is locally renowned for the quality of her care and her dedication to the well-being of her patients. She's even more passionate about children's oral health and has become the go-to authority for parents seeking dental care for their children—from toddlers to teens.

That innocent box of juice may typically have about four teaspoons of sugar in a single serving—pop is worse.

As a mother of three children herself, Dr. Amanda understands the challenges facing parents today. Shrinking household budgets, sophisticated product manufacturers, and the fact that tooth decay is the most prevalent dental disease among children—all present roadblocks.

"Take fruit juice for example. What could possibly be more wholesome and beneficial,

right? Not always. That innocent box of juice may typically have about four teaspoons of sugar in a single serving. Pop is much worse. One popular brand of cola contains 42 grams in a single serving. Most people don't realize that's a whopping eight-and-a-half teaspoons of sugar," she shares. "Can you imagine allowing an older child to drink four sodas in a day? They would have consumed the equivalent of 34 teaspoons of sugar."

I asked her about diet sodas as an alternative. "They can be a little better, but there is a trade-off. With zero sugar, you get a decreased pH, so the enamel on your child's primary and more vulnerable teeth can be compromised," she says. "As your child gets older and becomes attracted to more adult types of beverages, manufacturers have made those more appealing by including sugar in their content. The famous sports drink that originated in Florida has three teaspoons of sugar in every serving and the fashionable brand of water that's enhanced with vitamins is also spiked with more than two teaspoons of sugar."

By taking a proactive approach, Dr. Amanda stresses, there is plenty parents can do to ensure their children have a beautiful smile for years to come.

"Read food labels diligently and check for sugar content which can be disguised as high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, glucose and dextrose. Avoid pop at all costs. Serve water, natural-unsweetened fruit juices and re-visit milk as a wholesome and natural beverage with a multitude of benefits."

Then the good doctor disclosed her secret weapon. "Since parents can't always be there to supervise their children, many times we recommend that dental sealants be applied to the permanent molars and premolars. Sealants fill grooves and pits in the teeth, while blocking cavity causing plaque from forming in hard-to-reach areas," she explains. This is a relatively recent technology that can save a child's teeth, and parent's money, during the course of his or her youth.

Sealants fill grooves and pits in the teeth, while blocking cavity-causing plaque from forming in hard-to-reach areas.

"Teenagers can have a peculiar set of risk factors that parents should be aware of," Dr. Amanda emphasizes. "The oral piercing that your daughter tells you 'everyone is doing' can have serious health consequences that include permanent numbness in a pierced tongue, possible internal injury from swallowed jewelry and a risk for heart problems. And the craze for boys to chew tobacco poses and even greater risk for gum disease and oral cancer."

I thanked Dr. Donnelly for her insight as the next wave of patients began to arrive. "Sorry, it's that time of year and we are busy with parents bringing their kids in for back to school check-ups. We try extra hard to make it a fun experience for them." Watching

the children excitedly reach into the goodie bag as they leave, I could only wish there were dentists like Dr. Amanda when I was a child.

Dr. Amanda Donnelly is offering a free Crest Spin Brush for the first 20 new pediatric patients who mention Mimi when scheduling their first appointment. Call Dr. Donnelly's office at 330-929-2616, or visit www.DrAmandaDonnelly.com.

A Special for Mimi Readers

Mimi readers can enjoy a whiter smile for half price by visiting www.mimivanderhaven.com/diningdeals. A professional, at-home tooth whitening kit with a retail value of \$200 or more will be offered for just \$100. But hurry, because this offer is limited.

(Requires oral exam to determine eligibility.)



For the children, a trip to Dr. Donnelly's is rewarded with a toy from the basket.