"'I can do it!' was my daughter's favorite phrase. And she usually could. But flossing and brushing well can be hard no matter how old you are. So even though she is 7 I still help her and will until she is 10. When she's an adult, she'll thank me for her healthy smile."

– Stacie, Yakima, WA

Caring for Your Child's Permanent Teeth

Parents still have an important role

As a parent or caregiver, continue to take responsibility for your child's teeth and daily oral care while also teaching your child proper tooth brushing, good nutritional choices and healthy snacking. Get your child involved in developing routines and picking out his or her own toothbrush. Kids love to learn, but remember, YOU are still in charge of their health!

Stay on track with regular oral care

- Track permanent teeth as they come in.
- Continue providing a healthy diet.
- Continue regular tooth brushing. Make sure all surfaces are carefully brushed at least twice a day for two minutes. Use a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste.
- Start flossing if you are not already. When the sides of your child's teeth begin to touch, floss every day using regular floss or a hand-held flosser.

Have your child start brushing

Let your child begin to practice proper tooth brushing. You will still need to help with brushing until your child is about 8 years old. An easy rule to follow is: your child is ready to brush alone when he can tie his shoes on his own.

Consider sealants

Talk to your dentist about applying sealants to your child's permanent molars as they come in, usually around 6 and 12 years. Sealants are thin plastic coatings that are simply painted on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth to prevent decay. Sealants help keep cavity-causing germs out of the grooves of the molars, an area that can be difficult to keep clean.