

Many children lack access to dental care, which is a critical component in achieving good oral health. The ADA founded Give Kids A Smile to raise public awareness of what the U.S. Surgeon General has called a “silent epidemic” of dental disease and to encourage parents, politicians and people who care about children to address this issue in their communities.

Biting facts

- Dental care is still the **number one unmet need of Ohio children and low-income adults** (Ohio Dept. of Health Access to Dental Care Report, 2010)
- Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among children, **occurring at five times the rate of asthma and seven times that of hay fever** (Oral Health in America: A Report of the U.S. Surgeon General, 2003)
- The proportion of **third grade children with untreated cavities was unchanged between 1998-99 and 2004-05** (ODH Access to Dental Care Report, 2007)
- **More than 51 million school hours are lost each year** to dental-related illness. (Oral Health in America: A Report of the U.S. Surgeon General, 2003)
- By age 8, **an estimated 52 percent of children have had tooth decay**; and 78 percent of children who are 17 years of age have tooth decay. (www.cdc.gov.)
- **Toddlers have decay too**: 17 percent of 2 to 4 year olds already have tooth decay. (www.cdc.gov)
- Dental disease can threaten a child’s health, well-being and ability to achieve, and **children with oral health problems can have difficulty eating, sleeping and paying attention in school**. (Oral Health in America: A Report of the U.S. Surgeon General, 2003)
- Research indicates a **link between chronic oral infections and heart and lung disease, stroke, low birth weight and premature births**; a link also exists between periodontal disease and diabetes (Oral Health in America: A Report of the U.S. Surgeon General, 2000)
- Unlike a cold, **tooth decay does not go away**; it only gets worse. (American Dental Association)



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To learn more, call the
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