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**Dipika Shah, DDS, MAGD**

- Received Mastership From Academy Of General Dentistry
- Awardee Of Who's Who Among Executives & Professionals

- Listed On "Guide To America's Top Dentist" By Consumer Research Council Of America

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**732.615.2227****RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH**

**D**edicated dental professionals, health care providers, and others work together throughout the year to promote the benefits of good oral health to children and adults, caregivers, teachers, and many others.

We try to create increased oral health awareness in our community. There are lots of oral health issues affecting our community, such as access to care, early childhood caries, easy access to soda from school vending machines, sports injuries, oral piercing, and tobacco and methamphetamine use, to name a few.

**Sippy Cups and Your Child's Teeth:** What is baby bottle tooth decay and nursing mouth syndrome? Frequent exposure of a baby's teeth to liquids such as fruit juice, milk, or formula, which all contain sugar, can cause decay as soon as a tooth erupts in the mouth. Decay can occur when a baby is put to bed with a bottle. Make the child finish the bottle and feed water before putting a child to bed. Many training cups, like sippy or tippee cups or no spill cups, are essentially baby bottles in disguise. Carefully choose a training cup. At his or her first birthday, encourage a child to drink from a cup. Do not let the child carry the training cup around. Limit the time of exposure to sugary drinks.

**Sipping, Snacking, and Oral Health:** Parents can reduce their children's risk of tooth decay by helping them to develop good brushing and flossing habits like brushing after breakfast and after dinner. While monitoring beverage consumption, instead of soft drinks, encourage them to have water and low fat milk. Limit their snacks. If they crave a snack, offer them nutritious food. Sugary foods and drinks should be allowed only with meals because during meals, salivary flow increases and helps neutralize acid production and rinses food particles from the mouth. Schedule regular dental visits.

**Mouth Guards: Sports Equipment That Protects the Smile:** The #1 function of a mouth guard is to help protect against concussion and brain damage. Mouth guards are especially necessary because the bone between the ends of the jaw bone and the brain is so thin that a blow to the chin or elsewhere on the lower jaw could cause severe damage to your brain. Mouth guards also prevent tooth fracture and loss; cheek, tongue, and lip laceration; and neck and jaw joint damage. Mouth guards are strongly recommended for all contact and non-contact sports that pose injury to the mouth. Many sports organizations are mandating colored mouth guards so coaches and officials can readily see the compliance and colors are super popular with athletes.

**Oral Piercing: Not as Safe as You Think:** Piercing "body art" or self-expression may seem daring, cool, or stylish, but it is not as safe as one thinks. Piercing the tongue, lip, or cheek can interfere with speech, swallowing, or chewing and one can disregard it as just an inconvenience until you find out that it can cause chipped or cracked teeth, damage to fillings, injured gums, damage to the nerve, hypersensitivity to metals, increased salivary flow and drooling, or infection, pain, and swelling. These harmful effects can happen during the piercing, soon after, or even long after the procedure. Oral piercing can even cause life-threatening infection if it's not treated promptly. Don't pierce on a whim; consider all the complications and side effects. It also requires constant attention and upkeep.

For more information, you can contact Dr. Dipika Shah, 723 North Beers Street, Suite 2 F, Holmdel, NJ 07733. Phone (732) 264-8180, e-mail [Dentistnj@comcast.net](mailto:Dentistnj@comcast.net), or visit [www.Dentistnj.comcast.net](http://www.Dentistnj.comcast.net).

