



## **News Release**

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### **National Fruits and Vegetables Month: Healthy Diet Can Improve Oral Health**

*Delta Dental of Illinois Encourages Parents to Substitute Fruits and Vegetables for Sugary Snacks*

**NAPERVILLE, Ill. (August 31, 2015)** – It is no secret that fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals children need as part of a balanced, healthy diet, but they also play an important role when it comes to oral health. As part of National Fruits and Vegetables Month in September, Delta Dental of Illinois is encouraging parents to replace foods and drinks that are high in sugar with options that are good for both oral and overall health.

“When a child is getting plenty of fruits and vegetables, they are less likely to load up on sugary snacks,” said Dr. Katrina Spadoni, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. “Less sugar means less tooth decay, leading to fewer cavities.”

Many Illinois parents admit sweets are a major part of their children’s diets. According to the Delta Dental of Illinois Children’s Oral Health Illinois Survey, 31 percent of Illinois parents believe their child’s oral health isn’t as good as it could be because they eat too many sweets. This is especially concerning as 47 percent of Illinois parents say their child isn’t brushing enough.<sup>1</sup>

Eating fruits and vegetables not only helps decrease the intake of sugary snacks, but also has several oral health benefits:

- Fruits and vegetables provide vitamins and minerals like calcium, which strengthens teeth; iron, which promotes tongue health; and vitamin C, which is great for gums.
- Fruits and vegetables are mostly made of water. This keeps the mouth moist, making it difficult for bacteria to grow.

A healthy diet doesn’t have to mean a bland diet. There are a number of delicious fruits and vegetables your child already loves that may help improve oral health including:

**Strawberries:** You don’t have to mix them into a smoothie to love them. This delicious fruit is high in vitamin C, which can help clear plaque and remove surface stains on teeth in addition to being great for gums.

**Apples:** An apple a day keeps the dentist away! This fruit promotes saliva production, decreasing the amount of bacteria in the mouth.

**Carrots:** The perfect snack. They are high in vitamin A, critical to healthy tooth enamel.

**Celery:** You can't make ants on a log without it. Crunchy and full of water, this is the perfect vegetable for clearing out the grooves between teeth.

Of course, a healthy diet is only part of the battle when it comes to oral health. Dr. Spadoni recommends that children brush twice a day for two minutes, floss daily and visit the dentist every six months.

"Oral health is influenced by the foods we put into our bodies," said Dr. Spadoni. "I hope parents will take this reminder and help their children make healthier choices."

For more tips on taking care of children's oral health, visit Delta Dental of Illinois' oral health resource at [YourOralHealthHub.com](http://YourOralHealthHub.com).

**About Delta Dental of Illinois**

*Delta Dental of Illinois (DDIL) is a not-for-profit dental service corporation that provides dental benefit programs to individuals and more than 5,000 employee groups throughout Illinois. DDIL covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members in these groups nationwide. DDIL is based in Naperville, Illinois and offers single-site administration and client services.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Kelton, a leading global insights firm, conducted the 2015 Delta Dental of Illinois Children's Oral Health Survey. Interviews were conducted statewide via email with 231 parents of children ages 12 and under. For results based on the total sample of Illinois adults, the margin of error is ±6.5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.*