

# 805 LIVING

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Kids  
COVER TO COVER

# Mind/Body/Soul

By Maryann Hammers

## SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

Healthy kids, from tooth to toe.



### Tooth Truths

Pediatric dentist Dr. Lisa Brennan, founder of Oak Park Dentistry for Children, tells the truth about kids' teeth.

**805 Living:** *Why not just go to mom and dad's dentist?*

**Dr. Brennan:** Adult dental practices are focused on repairing problems, with less emphasis on flossing, diet, and sealants. A pediatric dentist ensures that children develop healthy habits and receive preventive treatment. For example, early emphasis on flossing can help children keep their teeth later in life, unlike many of today's elderly population, who lose teeth due to gum disease.

In addition, a pediatric dentist's specialized training emphasizes developmental stages of childhood. Very young children, preteens, and teenagers—as well as special-needs children—all require different approaches in guiding their dental development. Dental care starts with the eruption of the first tooth—every baby should have a first office visit around one year of age.

*What are the top risks for kids' teeth?*

Sticky fruit snacks, candy, and sodas are the worst offenders. Fruit snacks stick to teeth and feed bacteria, leading to decay. Soda has sugar, leading to an attack on the teeth. Additionally, sodas are acidic and dissolve tooth enamel. We remind parents and children to brush after sticky snacks and drink no more than one soda per week or for special occasions. Also, teachers should not give children candy rewards.

*Are cavities as prevalent now as they used to be?*

Toothaches are still a top cause of children missing school. Water fluoridation has been helpful in California, but children need to drink tap water to receive the benefit. We also see a lot of decay problems in frequent juice drinkers and babies who take their bottles to bed.

*Does it even matter if a child gets a cavity in a baby tooth?*

Baby-tooth decay causes pain and swelling, so the child suffers. Also, cavities—even in baby teeth—are an infection of *streptococcus mutans*. Once the bacteria are established, the permanent teeth are more likely to decay, even with good hygiene, diet, and fluoride rinse. The roots of baby teeth guide permanent teeth into place, so if a baby tooth is lost early, the space for the permanent tooth might be lost, causing orthodontic problems later.

*How is your office kid-friendly?*

We've designed our offices so children can get excited about their dental visit. At the Oak Park office, there's a tree in the check-up room, a castle in the waiting room, and a toy cave where children search for presents. We also have an outdoor play yard with climbing toys.

At the Newbury Park office, we have puzzle decor with colors, shapes, and numbers. The waiting room includes a game corner, kitchen area, and dress-up costumes. Our toy box sits over a painted fishpond, and the sticker wall is a big hit.

The take-home bag includes a toothbrush, floss, and chart for children to track their flossing. Every child who flosses for 30 days gets a one-dollar reward. Children choose two stickers from the sticker wall, two toys from the treasure box, and a third toy if they receive a "Number-One Brushing Score." After five Number-One Brushing Scores, children receive a \$10 bookstore gift certificate; and for 10 Number-One Brushing Scores, they get a ticket to Disneyland.

*Oak Park Dentistry for Children is at 368 Kanan Road, Oak Park, 818-889-5440; or 2277 Michael Drive, Newbury Park, 805-376-1822. The Wood Ranch/Simi Valley office opens this month, 1188 Roadrunner Way. For more information visit [www.oakparkdentistryforchildren.com](http://www.oakparkdentistryforchildren.com).*



### KID STUFF

Cool new products. (Great shower and birthday gifts, too!)

**GOT BOO-BOO?—Peas Cold Therapy** is an adorable remedy for bumps, bruises, burns, and bug bites. These soft, flexible, reusable cold packs (\$6) come in colorful starfish, duck, and fish shapes. *At CVS pharmacies.*

Why wear a boring beige bandage when you can show off Hannah Montana, Pixar characters, or Pooh? **Nexcare Comfort Pals and Tattoo Waterproof Bandages** (from \$4) turn tears to smiles because they are decorated with favorite friends, such as *High School Musical* stars, Tigger and Pooh, and other Disney favorites. *At Target and grocery and drugstores.*

**SOFT FOR BABY**—California Baby organic, natural, and gentle hair and skincare products are safe for the tiniest family members. Products include sunscreen, shampoo, lotion, hand wash—even insect repellent. From \$10. At Whole Foods, Target, and Lassen's; [www.californiababy.com](http://www.californiababy.com).



Start baby off right with Epicuren Baby lotions, cleansers, diaper sprays, and gift sets, all made with pure, natural ingredients. From \$14.50. At spas and salons, including Salon at The Landing, 32131 Lindero Canyon Blvd., Westlake Village, 805-432-0909; [www.episencial.com](http://www.episencial.com).



**MORNING MUNCHIES**—EnviroKidz cereals are organic and natural with less sugar, fat, and sodium than major brands; all flavors are gluten-free. Choose from Amazon Frosted Flakes, Gorilla Munch (cornmeal balls), Panda Puffs (corn balls with peanut-butter flavor), Koala Crisp (cocoa brown-rice puffs), or Leapin Lemurs (peanut butter and chocolate balls). One percent from each sale is donated to environmental organizations. At

Lassen's and major grocers; or [www.naturespath.com](http://www.naturespath.com).

**YES EYE CAN**—The Eye Can Art kits (\$24) were created by three mothers, who are also artists and art teachers, to encourage kids ages 5 and up to use their imagination to create prints, wax drawings, books, paintings, or whatever they want, with all the necessary nontoxic, washable materials included. At [www.eyecanart.com](http://www.eyecanart.com).



**DON'T MISS:** The Handstand Kids Back-to-School Party, where families can make healthful back-to-school snacks from the *Handstand Kids Cookbook* by Calabasas resident Yvette Garfield. Try international, vegetarian, and sugar-free snacks and treats like Italian Popcorn, Chips with Mango Salsa, and Chinese Mango Smoothies. Free. At Brain Builders, 3825 Thousand Oaks Blvd. (near Trader Joe's), 805-777-0111. Information: 818-917-7200; [www.handstandkids.com](http://www.handstandkids.com). ■



## YOU WANT PERFECTION ON YOUR SPECIAL DAY.

*Why Not Every Day?*

With comprehensive dentistry by Dr. Kathleen Carson, you can look and feel your best all the time.

*Can dentistry really have such dramatic effects? Absolutely.*

*"I truly believe the patient's happiness comes first to Dr. Carson. She was extremely professional and I think she is a perfectionist. When it comes to my teeth, a perfectionist is the only doctor I want."* ~ Grace Ellerbrock

Why wait for a special occasion?  
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