

# Health Bulletin



## Affordable Ways To Keep Smiles Bright

(NAPSA)—In recent years, the association between oral health and one's overall health has been well documented.

Research indicates that there may be an association between cavities and gum disease and diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and even Alzheimer's disease. In the United States, however, there are an estimated 47 million Americans who have no health insurance, and for many others, high co-pays make visiting the dentist a luxury.

### Healthier Teeth

"For children between the ages of 5 and 17 in the U.S., tooth decay is more common than asthma and hay fever," says Dr. Marsha Butler, DDS, vice president, Global Oral Health and Professional Relations, Colgate-Palmolive Company. "Also, figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that untreated tooth decay began rising this decade for the first time in 50 years. These are lean times, but there are still several steps families can take to promote good oral health." Dr. Butler offers this advice:

**1.** Brush teeth and gums with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, especially after eating breakfast and before bedtime.

**2.** Floss teeth daily. Parents may want to model proper techniques by flossing with their kids.

**3.** Use fluoride rinse for strong and healthy teeth and gums.

**4.** Practice healthy eating by getting plenty of calcium and limiting daily snacks.



**Taking care of teeth and gums is an important part of total health.**

**5.** If visiting the dentist regularly is cost prohibitive, check with the local board of health for dentists who offer their services on a sliding scale or consider visiting a local school of dentistry. Graduate students at many of these institutions offer excellent, low-cost care under the supervision of licensed dentists.

**6.** Log on to [www.colgatebsbf.com](http://www.colgatebsbf.com)—the Web site of Colgate's national education program, Bright Smiles, Bright Futures—to find out when the company's mobile dental vans will visit your area. Manned by local dental professionals, this fleet of vans sets up free clinics in target areas and at cultural events across the United States. In 2002, Colgate made a public commitment to reach 100 million children by the year 2010 with free screenings, treatment referrals and oral health education. The company will realize this goal in 2009, one year ahead of schedule.