

February

## Fun Facts

### February is Children's Dental Health Month

For healthy teeth and gums, and fewer cavities, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children only drink milk or water between meals, instead of other beverages. The AAP also recommends that parents:

- Limit sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes
- Allow no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of 100% fruit juice a day
- Avoid carbonated beverages and juice drinks
- Encourage meals and snacks from the MyPyramid Five Food Groups

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Pediatric Dentistry and Oral Health. *Pediatrics*, 2008; 122:1387-1394.

### Chocolate Milk: A Dental Health Hero

Chocolate milk, one of kids' favorite foods, can actually help protect teeth against cavities. The reason? Because it is liquid, chocolate milk clears from the mouth faster than other sweet foods, and the calcium, phosphorous and cocoa in chocolate milk may actually protect teeth against cavities.

### Milk and Fruit a Must with Fast-Food Kids' Meals

Fast food meals are a reality for most families, at least occasionally, if not more often. According to a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, parents can take two simple steps can help ensure that kids get the nutrition they need when eating fast-food kids' meals. First, make sure they drink milk instead of soda, and second, encourage fruit as a side dish. Researchers found that the kids' meals for 12 fast restaurants that met guidelines for being nutritionally adequate all included milk and fruit. These meals also provided more iron, vitamin A and calcium, and less fat and added sugar than meals that did not meet the guidelines.

Source: O'Donnell, SI, et al. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 88: 1388-95, 2008.

### Chocolate-Cherry Smoothie



Valentine's Day is the time for chocolate and cherries. This recipe combines both for a calcium-packed smoothie. It's like eating a chocolate-covered cherry, but with much more nutrition!

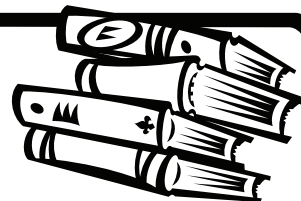
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup unsweetened, dark-pitted cherries, frozen
- 1 8-ounce container of chocolate yogurt
- 1 cup ice cubes
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 teaspoons presweetened cocoa powder

Place milk, cherries, yogurt, ice cubes, honey and cocoa powder in a blender jar. Cover and blend on high until smooth. Pour into glasses and enjoy!

Makes 3 servings

Source: *The Best Milk Recipes in America, Family Favorites Edition*. National Fluid Milk Processor Education Program, 1999

### Kids' Corner: Challenge Kids to Good Dental Health



Have children keep track of their brushing, flossing and snacking at home for the next week. Award a star or a sticker each time they:

- Brush after breakfast
- Brush before bed
- Floss at least once during the day
- Eat their day's snacks from the Five Food Groups

Their goal is to get four stars each day, or at least 28 for the week. Decide on a special privilege or treat for completing the challenge.