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PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

FILLING APPOINTMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are filling appointments scheduled in the morning?

It has been our experience that children do best with fillings and other treatment visits earlier in the day when they are fresh and rested. We schedule routine checkups during the after-school hours. Please let us know if your school requires a school absence slip.

Do you do all of the fillings in one visit?

When cavities are on different sides of the mouth they will require local anesthetic in each of those areas. We typically split the appointments up into areas to allow teeth in one area to be numb and worked on at a time. We have found that children have a better experience, more predictable behavior and less postoperative discomfort when the treatment time is short and fewer areas are numbed in one visit. It also allows us to use a smaller amount of local anesthetic at each visit resulting in a greater margin of safety for our patients.

Why fill a baby tooth when they fall out anyway?

While it is true that baby teeth do eventually come out, it is also true that they are important to your child in the meantime. A cavity is essentially a bacterial infection of a tooth. Untreated cavities can result in that infection potentially spreading beyond the tooth. An abscess is not an uncommon result from a baby tooth that has been left untreated with associated pain, swelling, discomfort, and difficulty eating.

Children need their baby teeth to speak clearly, eat comfortably, and smile with confidence. Also, baby teeth hold space for the permanent teeth. If one is lost too early due to an untreated cavity, the others shift into the empty space which can lead to bite/orthodontic problems in the future. Children will have their back baby teeth until they are 10-13 years old. We always consider the length of time of the tooth remaining in the mouth when determining its treatment.

Are xrays needed before filling a cavity?

Xrays are a very important diagnostic tool and are ideal to obtain before any filling is placed. They allow the doctor to see below the surface of the cavity to better determine and prepare for the exact treatment needed. Whenever possible an xray should be taken of a tooth before placing a filling.

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