Obesity and tooth decay are of equal concern for children today. Obesity is defined as having excess body fat. In fact, the percentage of children with obesity in the United States has more than tripled since the 1970s. Today, about one in five children ages 6 to 19 has obesity. And about one in five children ages 5 to 11 have at least one untreated decayed tooth—making it one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood in the United States. While childhood obesity and oral health may not be directly connected, they are both preventable and they also share a common contributing factor: nutrition. That’s good news – because it means steps you take to prevent one can also help to prevent the other.

Healthy nutrition is the key

Here are nutrition habits to help the children in your life maintain a healthy weight and a healthy mouth.

› Eat nutritious and balanced meals
› Eat at least five servings of fruits and veggies every day

Children who don’t eat at least five servings of fruits and veggies every day are 3x more at risk for developing cavities

› Avoid sugary snacks and foods
› Limit snacking
› Drink more water and less sugar-sweetened beverages

A 20-ounce bottle of non-diet cola can add an extra 227 calories to your child’s day.
A 12 oz serving of apple juice or fruit punch can add as much as 192 calories

Here are key practices for good oral health:

› Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste
› Floss at least once a day
› Visit your dentist regularly

Together, all the way.
Children with poor eating habits are more at-risk of becoming overweight or obese and experiencing dental cavities in their adult teeth.\(^1,3\)