

Benefits Spotlight

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5 apps that inspire good brushing habits for kids

When it comes to helping your kids build healthy habits, finding ways to make it fun is important. If you need a place to start, grab your phone or tablet. We've rounded up our favorite — and free — tooth brushing apps to make at-home dental hygiene fun for your kids.

Five tooth brushing apps your kids will love

Mimizaur Tooth Brushing Timer: Turn brushing into a fun adventure for kids, with engaging cartoons that help your kids brush for the recommended 1-2 minutes. The app was designed for kids 3-6 years of age, but older users will love it, too. Download: [Apple](#) | [Google Play](#)

Brush DJ: Among the highest-ranked tooth brushing apps, Brush DJ makes at-home dental hygiene fun by pumping out 2 minutes of music to help kids brush for the full recommended amount. Developed by a dentist, the app also promotes dental health by reminding you to change your toothbrush and offers dental hygiene tips. Download: [Apple](#) | [Google Play](#)

Toothy Teeth Brushing Timer: Toothy helps kids track their progress with tooth brushing and plays music to make the experience fun. Kids will get motivated to see their progress, and before long, great oral hygiene will be an ingrained habit. It also offers reminders on your next dentist visit and when to change your toothbrush. Download: [Apple](#)

Brusheez Little Monsters: Kids will love being able to pick their own monster character. The app comes with a 2-minute timer, and the monster characters guide your kids through brushing their teeth with fun music playing in the background. Download: [Apple](#)

Disney Magic Timer by Oral-B: When your kids see their favorite Disney, Marvel and Star Wars characters, they'll be excited to brush longer. In addition to a fun timer, there is also a calendar function that shows kids their progress in building their healthy dental habits. Download: [Apple](#) | [Google Play](#)

A dentist can share more ways to boost healthy childhood habits

Apps are just one way to help create good oral health habits in your kids. Your dentist can share many other ways to help children get excited about taking care of their teeth. Like adults, kids should see a dentist two times a year for a deep cleaning and preventive dental checkup. Do you need help finding an in-network dentist? Check out the Delta Dental of Iowa [Find a Provider](#) tool to locate a quality family dentist near you.

Vision viewpoints: Do tools to prevent eye strain really work?

For many of us, it's rare to get through a day without spending a lot of time in front of a screen. Dr. Chad Overman, Delta Dental of Iowa's Director of Vision Benefits, shares how you can limit the toll screens have on your vision and whether products aimed to prevent digital eye strain are worth buying.

Q: What are some common symptoms and signs of digital eye strain?

Dr. Overman: The most common symptoms of digital eye strain are tired and dry eyes, headache, and blurry vision. Oftentimes, those symptoms get worse in the afternoon.

Q: Could you explain the role of digital devices in causing eye strain? What aspects of screen use contribute to this problem?

Dr. Overman: The main factors that lead to digital eye strain are if the screen is too close to your eyes, contrast and brightness, the amount of time in front of the device and the blue light emitted by the device. We also only blink a third as much when looking at a digital screen, and that is not good for our eyes.

Q: Blue light-blocking glasses have gained popularity for reducing digital eye strain. Can you discuss their effectiveness?

Dr. Overman: The evidence around blue light-blocking glasses varies, and there's a need to get more conclusive studies on whether they actually help. But, in general, we believe blocking the blue light is a good idea and by doing so, we reduce eye strain. If you spend a lot of time in front of screens, it's not a bad idea to explore getting a pair to reduce your blue light exposure.

Q: Are there any other tools and technologies that you recommend to prevent digital eye strain?

Dr. Overman: The best ways to prevent digital eye strain include taking regular breaks away from screens, decreasing your overall time on digital devices, and getting a screen protector that reduces glare and/or blue light.

Q: Many people spend long hours in front of computer screens for work. What advice do you have for ergonomic setups or exercises to reduce the risk of eye strain and relax eye muscles while using digital devices?

Dr. Overman: Use the 20/20/20 Rule to reduce your risk of eye strain. This means you look 20 feet away every 20 minutes for 20 seconds. You can set a timer on your phone to remind you to take a break. This is an effective way to give your eyes a break from screens. You should also consider having good lighting with minimal glare and setting your computer top at eye level, so you are looking slightly down as you read.

Q: What are the potential long-term consequences of chronic digital eye strain?

Dr. Overman: Over time, digital eye strain can lead to headaches, blurry vision, dry eyes and even poor performance at work or school. Investing in blue light-blocking glasses and screen protectors may help, but taking breaks using the 20/20/20 Rule is a simple and no-cost way to keep these problems from interfering with your life.