Protecting Your Smile in Middle and High School

1 in 2 students in grades 9-12 in North Dakota reported one or more cavities.

1 in 4 students in grades 7 and 8 in North Dakota reported not visiting the dentist in the last year.

2 of every 9 students in grades 9-12 in North Dakota reporting not visiting the dentist in the last year.

**DO**

- Wear a mouth guard while playing sports.
- Brush your teeth twice a day, and floss every day.
- Visit your dentist annually (preferably every 6 months).
- Have your wisdom teeth checked.
- Keep a balanced diet that mixes fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and dairy.

**DON’T**

- Regularly drink sugary beverages. The average teen male drinks 868 cans of soda per year.
- Get lip or tongue piercings: These increase the risk of oral infection.
- Smoke or chew tobacco: This injures teeth and gums and increases the risk of cancer.
- Eat too many acidic foods (such as oranges, limes, coffee, lemons, etc.) because they can cause enamel erosion.
- Drink bottled water in place of water from the faucet that is fluoridated. This fluoride reduces the risk of cavities.