

## Celebrate Oral Health Month in April

As the country celebrates Oral Health Month in April, the Region of Peel is highlighting the importance of children's dental health. The Region is promoting the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program, which is helping make healthy teeth and gums a reality for Peel children.

Three out of five Canadian children ages six to 11 have had cavities, said Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health for the Region. Left untreated, cavities can lead to pain, infection, difficulty eating and difficulty concentrating. This is why the Region of Peel recommends that children visit a dental clinic every year for a check-up, starting at one year of age. Doing so helps to avoid unnecessary pain and suffering and contributes to children's overall health and well-being.

Approximately six million Canadians avoid visiting the dentist every year simply because of the cost. To help ease the burden of expensive dental care on families, the government-funded Healthy Smiles Ontario program offers free dental cleanings, check-ups, treatment and emergency services for children who qualify. Although the Healthy Smiles Ontario program is being promoted during Oral Health Month (April), it is available to help residents all year round and the Region is encouraging residents to apply. Children 17 years of age and under are eligible for the program if they live in Ontario and their family is experiencing financial hardship. For more information, including how to apply to the Healthy Smiles Ontario program, Peel residents can call 905-799-7700 or visit [ontario.ca/healthysmiles](https://ontario.ca/healthysmiles)