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FLORIDA DENTAL ASSOCIATION

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Health/Community Item

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**FLORIDA DENTAL ASSOCIATION ENCOURAGES
CONTINUED DENTAL HEALTH THROUGHOUT SUMMER**

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Dental Association (FDA) encourages parents, caregivers and summer activity leaders to emphasize the importance of good dental health throughout the 2007 summer break.

“Dental care plays an important role in the overall well-being of Florida’s youth,” FDA President Dr. Dan Henry said. “Even though students are not going through normal routines, it is imperative to continue brushing, flossing and attending regular dental appointments.”

More than 2.6 million kindergarten through 12th grade students are on summer break this year. It is essential they remember to keep up their dental care over the summer so they are ready to learn during the next school year. Dental-related illnesses account for 52 million lost school hours each year around the nation.

To increase your child’s resistance to dental ailments, remember these key points:

- *Continue brushing:* Make sure to brush teeth twice a day with a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste. The American Dental Association (ADA) provides its Seal of Acceptance on many brands of toothpaste. Toothbrushes should be made of soft bristles.
- *Encourage flossing:* Clean between teeth once daily with floss or an interdental cleaner. Decay-causing bacteria linger between teeth where toothbrush bristles cannot reach.
- *Eat a well-balanced diet:* Follow U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for healthy nutrition habits. Try to avoid snacking, but choose items such as yogurt, cheese and raw vegetables if necessary. Be sure to limit sugary fruit drinks and sodas. Visit www.nutrition.gov for more information.
- *Attend dental appointments:* Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams. Dental appointments are an important part of overall oral health.
- *Establish an emergency dental plan:* In the case of any dental emergency, remain calm. If there is a broken tooth or bitten tongue, clean the area with warm water and apply a cold compress – visit the emergency room if bleeding continues. If there is an object stuck between teeth, try to remove it with floss, not a sharp object. Always call your dentist if you have questions or concerns.

- *Know your dental emergency options:* When on vacation it is important to know your dental options in the case of an emergency, especially if you are outside of the United States. Be sure to check with the health department or ministry in the destination country to see what national guidelines are in place for dentists. Also ask about your patient and legal rights if something goes wrong during or after treatment. Visit the ADA Web site at www.ada.org/public/manage/care/index.asp for more information, or visit the Organization for Safety and Asepsis Procedures Web site for at www.osap.org.

The FDA is a Tallahassee-based, statewide, professional association representing member-dentists in Florida. Founded in 1884 by 12 dentists, the FDA now has almost 7,000 members, representing about 72 percent of all Florida-licensed dentists. The FDA maintains three offices in Tallahassee and has 60 employees. A constituent society of the ADA, the FDA's mission is to improve the oral health of Florida residents through high practice standards, continuous professional, public advocacy and improving the practice environment.

For more information regarding dental health care, visit the FDA at www.floridadental.org, or the ADA at www.ada.org.

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