WVU Dentistry offers free children's dental exams

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – Children ages one to 17 can receive free exams, any necessary X-rays and fluoride treatments on Friday, Feb. 1, from 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. in Morgantown at the West Virginia University Pediatric Dentistry Clinic as part of WVU Dental Care's National Children's Dental Health Month celebrations.

The exams provide more than $100 worth of services for children. Appointments are required, and space is limited. To schedule an appointment for the free exam, call 304-293-0401. Patients can begin requesting appointments on Friday, Jan. 18.

"The exam can preventative and also determine if additional treatment is needed," Therese Bonasso, WVU dental hygienist, said. "Patients receive oral hygiene instructions and information on how diet choices impact oral health."

The appointments are part of the annual "Give Kids a Smile!" national dental access program of the American Dental Association and the West Virginia Dental Association. Dental and dental hygiene students from the WVU School of Dentistry will perform care under the supervision of faculty.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that children see a dentist after they get their first baby tooth and no later than their first birthday. An early visit enables a dentist to determine the child's risk of cavities so that preventive action can be taken before the first cavity appears.

The clinic dentists and dental hygienists expect to see 15 children every 45 minutes for a total of 135 patients throughout the day. Participants in past years have ranged from existing patients to children who have never seen a dentist. Children of all needs and levels of care are welcome at the clinic.

For more information on the WVU School of Dentistry, visit dentistry.hsc.wvu.edu.

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